CENTRE DE RECHERCHE SUR L'ANTI-CORRUPTION

Annual Report

YEAR

2024

We help governments, public institutions, businesses and local communities to solve complex problems related to corruption.

Centre de Recherche sur l'Anti-Corruption



Contents

Acronyms 03

Part 1 · Activities and impact 04

2024: breaking the silence 05

2024 at a glance 06

Citizens who report corruption in the courts 07

March–May 2024 – Setting up the social alert system 07

June–July 2024 – Support from judicial authorities 07

May–July 2024 – Awareness raising 07

May–July 2024 – Alerts and responses 08

Case study 1 · Daring to report: the alerts of 2024 08

Lemba, April–May 2024 – An arbitrary arrest 08

Kalamu, July 2024 – A piece of evidence that disappeared 08

What citizens reported – The other documented cases 09

What we learned – Fear is the first obstacle 09

Students who speak out against corruption 09

September–November 2024 – Four university integrity clubs 09

October–December 2024 – Journalism 10

2024 – Training modules 10

Case study 2 · Students name corruption at university 10

Bel Campus, 24 October 2024 – "Everyone has a role to play" 10

3 December 2024 – The diagnosis 10

Their answer – A law to protect those who report 11

Integrity education before Parliament 11

CERC at the United Nations 12

9–10 May 2024 – United Nations Civil Society Conference, Nairobi 12

Research and advocacy 12

April 2024 – Illicit political financing 12

March 2024 – Building infrastructure with integrity 12

Training civil society 12

Part 2 · Funds statements 13

Financial review 14

By project – Funding in 2024 14

All projects – Consolidated statement – all projects 14

Budget – Budget and actual 14

Restricted funds – Funded projects 15

Income – Income 15

Expenditure – Expenditure 15

Funding policy – Our sources of funding 15

Note 1 – PARJ2 – REPLIC partnership – expenditure 2024 15

Our partners 16

Translated from the original French edition.

Acronyms

Acronym	Meaning
ACAJ	Association Congolaise pour l'Accès à la Justice
APNAC	African Parliamentarians' Network Against Corruption
CERC	Centre de Recherche sur l'Anti-Corruption
DGD	Belgian Directorate-General for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
IREX	International Research & Exchanges Board
PARJ2	Justice Reform Support Programme, phase 2
REPLIC	Agir pour une justice redevable, plurielle et intègre au Congo (Acting for an Accountable, Plural and Honest Justice in the Congo)
UNCAC	United Nations Convention against Corruption
US$	United States dollar
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

Part 1 · Activities and impact

What changed in 2024 for citizens seeking justice and for students facing corruption at university, and how CERC helped.



2024: breaking the silence



In 2024, with RCN Justice & Démocratie, CERC gave citizens of Kinshasa a way to report corruption in the courts, and gave students a voice against corruption at university.

Corruption in the justice system is hard to fight because its victims rarely speak: they fear reprisals, do not know where to go, or no longer expect anything from the courts. In 2024, CERC worked to change that.

With **RCN Justice & Démocratie**, under the **PARJ2** funded by the European Union and the **REPLIC** project co-funded by the DGD, CERC set up a **social alert system** in Kinshasa: 9 focal points from civil society, a toll-free number posted in the courts, and civil society's response to every alert. It also supported students from **four universities** to create integrity clubs and to name the corrupt practices they face.

CERC and APNAC DRC took the proposed law on Integrity Clubs and integrity education to the National Assembly; CERC took part in the United Nations Civil Society Conference in Nairobi, published analyses on political financing and on integrity in infrastructure, and trained civil society actors.

This report tells these stories in two parts: Part 1 describes what changed, with two case studies; Part 2 sets out the funds statements for 2024.

OUR MISSION

The mission of CERC is to advance knowledge of the causes and consequences of corruption and support the development of new anti-corruption policies and initiatives in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. CERC aims to empower young people with skills and tools to create positive change towards more accountable, open, and inclusive institutions and public services.

OUR VISION

A Congo in which government, public institutions, politics, businesses, and civil society are free from corruption.

2024 at a glance

Citizens who report, courts that open their doors, and students who speak out.

9

focal points from civil society collecting corruption complaints in Kinshasa's courts

7

alerts received and documented in the first two months of the social alert system

4

university integrity clubs, at the University of Kinshasa, the Pan-African University, Reverend Kim University and Bel Campus University

61

students who diagnosed corruption at university and drew up a joint action plan (December 2024)



PARJ2 AND REPLIC, WITH RCN JUSTICE & DÉMOCRATIE · 2024

Citizens who report corruption in the courts



Before 2024, a citizen asked for a bribe at a prosecutor's office in Kinshasa had nowhere to turn. In 2024, they could call a toll-free number, talk to a focal point in their community, and count on civil society to follow up.

On 1 April 2024, CERC and **RCN Justice & Démocratie** (RCN J&D) signed a specific partnership agreement to implement the anti-corruption component of the second phase of the **PARJ2**, funded by the **European Union**, and of the project **REPLIC**, co-funded by the DGD. These projects contribute to result 14 of axis 4 of the National Justice Reform Policy (2017–2026).

Concluded until 31 December 2024, the agreement first covered the **social alert and response system**. An amendment signed on 12 August 2024 added support to university anti-corruption clubs and journalism.

MARCH–MAY 2024

Setting up the social alert system

With technical support from RCN J&D, CERC developed the system's tools: a guide to the social alert system, a memorandum of understanding with the focal points and an implementation strategy.

The system was run by a network of **9 focal points**, appointed by civil society organisations and anti-corruption networks – ACVDP, PONJA PONJA, C4, GREM, COCOLUCO, AFEVOPHA and CERC – to collect and pass on corruption complaints from their communities.

On 6 May 2024, RCN J&D handed CERC 9 phones and 8 SIM cards, which CERC distributed to the focal points.

JUNE–JULY 2024

Support from judicial authorities

CERC met the prosecutors and heads of division of the public prosecutor's offices of Kalamu, Ndjili and Matete to present the social alert system. Mission orders allowed 7 focal points to access the courts. Several judicial authorities authorised the display of the system's **toll-free number** in their jurisdictions.

To find resource persons within the justice system, CERC also ran small surveys among litigants and traders near prosecutors' offices and courts, to identify magistrates known for their integrity.

MAY–JULY 2024

Awareness raising

- From 15 May 2024, word-of-mouth awareness raising among the general public, and participation in partners' activities in Kisenso, Ndjili and the CPA neighbourhood: about **45 people** reached.
- From 8 June 2024, awareness raising among litigants and the managers of restaurants and small shops near the courts of Ndjili and Kalamu: about **60 people** (27 women and 33 men).
- **70 posters** with the toll-free number, out of 150 planned, put up in June 2024 at the prosecutors' offices, high courts and peace courts of Kalamu, Ndjili and Matete, and at the Ndjili notary office, with the authorities' approval.
- **250 leaflets** printed in July 2024 for Kalamu and Matete; 80 had been handed out by the end of the month, as the public transport strike of 29 July interrupted the activities.

The message was simple: "Together, let us say no to corruption, by reporting corrupt acts and practices in the justice sector."

MAY–JULY 2024

Alerts and responses

CERC received its first 3 alerts in May 2024. By the end of June, it had received and documented 7, of which 3 could not be followed up because the victims or witnesses withdrew for fear of reprisals. The alerts came from the focal points, public speaking forums, awareness-raising activities and the toll-free number.

CERC responded through advocacy with judicial authorities – notably with ACVDP, in Kalamu and Ndjili, from 8 June 2024 – and by advising and assisting litigants. On 26 July 2024, it supported ACVDP in following a case before the Kalamu high court about a piece of evidence that had disappeared.

BEFORE

No channel for citizens to report corruption in the justice sector; victims kept silent for fear of reprisals.

AFTER

A toll-free number posted in courts, with the authorities' approval; 9 focal points in the communities; 7 alerts documented by the end of June 2024, and advocacy and legal assistance in response.

CASE STUDY · SOCIAL ALERT SYSTEM

Case study 1 · Daring to report: the alerts of 2024



Behind each alert is a person who decided not to stay silent. Here is what citizens reported, and what CERC and its partners did.

LEMBA, APRIL–MAY 2024

An arbitrary arrest

In April 2024, a resident of Lemba was arrested and beaten by police officers for no reason, until he lost consciousness. His family filed a complaint with the military prosecutor's office, but the case did not move, and the family suspected that the investigating magistrate had been bribed. Alerted through the system, CERC went to the military prosecutor's office on 15 and 16 May 2024 to advocate for the case, and advised the victim on his rights and the next steps.

KALAMU, JULY 2024

A piece of evidence that disappeared

On 26 July 2024, CERC supported its partner ACVDP in following a case before the Kalamu high court in which a piece of evidence had disappeared – a case that, without civil society watching, could have quietly collapsed.

WHAT CITIZENS REPORTED

The other documented cases

THE PEOPLE ARE NOT NAMED

- **Release of a suspect.** According to the victim's family, a judicial police officer released, for 100,000 Congolese francs, a young man arrested for assaulting and injuring a woman; once free, he threatened to kill the victim and her family.
- **Land dispute.** In Kimbanseke, a woman who had won a land dispute at several levels saw her case dropped by the prosecutor's office, and had to pay to obtain the decision.
- **Assault at work.** An employee of a public company, beaten by his superior after claiming his mission allowance, filed a complaint with the public prosecutor's office. The magistrate heard witnesses without hearing the complainant, while the accused claimed to have bribed the prosecutor's office. The complainant challenged the magistrate.
- **Child custody.** In July 2024, a mother accused her former husband of paying a magistrate of a children's court to obtain custody of their children. CERC followed up and documented the case.

WHAT WE LEARNED

Fear is the first obstacle

Of the 7 alerts documented by the end of June 2024, 3 could not be followed up because the victims or witnesses withdrew for fear of reprisals. Protecting those who report is the condition for the system to work – the same conclusion the students reached when they called for a whistleblower protection law.

YOUTH ANTI-CORRUPTION PROJECT INCUBATOR · PARJ2 AND REPLIC, 2024

Students who speak out against corruption



Students in Kinshasa live with corruption at university – and rarely talk about it. In 2024, in four universities, they organised, named the practices they face, and set out what they will do about them.

Selected by RCN J&D through a call for expressions of interest to raise young people's awareness of the fight against corruption, CERC ran the **Youth Anti-Corruption Project Incubator**. Its aim: to help mobilise students as citizens against corruption, particularly at university and in the justice sector.

SEPTEMBER–NOVEMBER 2024

Four university integrity clubs

CERC supported the creation of integrity clubs in four universities: the **University of Kinshasa**, the **Pan-African University**, the **Reverend Kim University** and **Bel Campus University**. Each club had up to 15 students – as many women as men, 30% of them marginalised or under-represented students – led by a president and a vice-president.

Each club held three meetings, on the project and its partners, the legal and institutional framework against corruption, and the role of students. The students studied the United Nations Convention against Corruption, the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption, the SADC Protocol against Corruption and national legislation, and the institutions in charge of enforcing them.

They identified the legal obstacles to fighting corruption in the DRC: the lack of a special anti-corruption law, of a law on access to information and of a law protecting whistleblowers. Ready to report corruption but afraid of reprisals, they included in their joint roadmap advocacy with the National Assembly for the adoption of a **whistleblower protection law**.

OCTOBER–DECEMBER 2024

Journalism

To reach a wider audience, CERC worked with the online media **Habari RDC**, which published articles on the activities – including awareness raising among Bel Campus University students and the creation of a network of students against corruption in Congolese universities – with a focus on the sexual corruption identified by the students.

2024

Training modules

CERC's training sessions used modules prepared by anti-corruption expert Paulin Kibendelwa: understanding corruption (definitions and offences under the Congolese Criminal Code), the legal and institutional framework against corruption, and monitoring corruption.

CASE STUDY · YOUTH ANTI-CORRUPTION PROJECT INCUBATOR



Case study 2 · Students name corruption at university

On 3 December 2024, 61 students from four universities met at the Pan-African University. For the first time, they put words on what many of them had lived through.

BEL CAMPUS, 24 OCTOBER 2024

"Everyone has a role to play"

It began with an awareness day for law students at Bel Campus University. "It is essential to train students to fight corruption. As students and as citizens, everyone has a role to play in building a fair and honest Congo," said Jonathan Musa Nzamu, CERC's Regional Director for Kinshasa and Kongo Central. Clubs followed at Bel Campus and three other universities.

3 DECEMBER 2024

The diagnosis

At the inter-club meeting, **61 students** (18 women and 43 men) worked with an expert recruited by CERC to list the corrupt practices they face at university, and drew up a joint action plan.

PRACTICES IDENTIFIED AMONG TEACHERS

Money paid to pass ("lidabo"); sexual corruption in exchange for grades; forced sale of books as a condition for passing; nepotism in recruiting assistants; undeserved grades; grades deliberately lost; bribes to enter the exam room.

PRACTICES IDENTIFIED AMONG STUDENTS

Exams taken by someone else ("merco"); bribed invigilators; gifts to assistants before exams; swapped exam papers ("kotisa-bimisa"); falsified grades; favouritism, tribalism and influence peddling.

THEIR ANSWER

A law to protect those who report

The students were ready to report corruption, but afraid of reprisals. They identified the legal gaps that leave them exposed – no special anti-corruption law, no law on access to information, no law protecting whistleblowers – and wrote into their roadmap advocacy with the National Assembly for a **whistleblower protection law**. The online media Habari RDC took their findings to a wider public, with a focus on the sexual corruption the students had identified.

BEFORE

Corruption at university endured in silence: money to pass, sexual corruption for grades, bribed invigilators.

AFTER

Four integrity clubs, a shared diagnosis, a joint action plan and a demand for a whistleblower protection law – carried by the students themselves.

WITH APNAC DRC

Integrity education before Parliament



In **April 2024**, CERC and APNAC DRC took the proposed law on Integrity Clubs and integrity education to the **National Assembly**. Drafted with members of parliament, education experts and civil society after the 2023 consultations, it provides for Integrity Clubs of elected students in every secondary school and an Integrity Education course in the regular curriculum. CERC and APNAC DRC called on the population and civil society to support it.

SPECIAL CONSULTATIVE STATUS WITH ECOSOC SINCE 2021

CERC at the United Nations



9–10 MAY 2024

United Nations Civil Society Conference, Nairobi

The Centre de Recherche sur l'Anti-Corruption was honoured to take part in the United Nations Civil Society Conference in Nairobi on 9 and 10 May 2024. CERC shared its reports, which show how corruption affects the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and can also be an obstacle to the implementation of the Pact for the Future. During the conference, CERC shared its experiences and its digital tools for the future.

2024

Research and advocacy



APRIL 2024

Illicit political financing

Building on its report on the DRC's implementation of the UN Convention against Corruption, CERC analysed the financing of political parties. Despite the legal framework (Law 004/02 of 15 March 2004 and Law 08/005 of 10 June 2008), CERC points to the absence of an authority responsible for supervising and enforcing political financing rules, political parties not reporting their annual financial statements, and the lack of sanctions.

CERC recommends an independent supervisory authority, deterrent sanctions and regular, public financial reports by political parties.

MARCH 2024

Building infrastructure with integrity

Corruption in infrastructure projects financed by international aid and public resources leads to cost overruns, poor-quality work and delays. CERC's model combines technology – the GovCheck application – with citizen advocacy, so that communities can detect and prevent corruption and hold officials and contractors to account.

WITH ACAJ, KINSHASA, 4–6 DECEMBER 2024

Training civil society



From 4 to 6 December 2024, CERC and the **ACAJ** held a three-day training in Kinshasa, led by Paulin Kibendelwa and Jonathan Musa Nzamu, CERC's Provincial Director. ACAJ members and a blogger from Habari RDC worked on strengthening their capacity to prevent, detect and fight corruption.

The training aimed to raise awareness of the root causes and consequences of corruption; to equip participants with legal, practical and ethical tools to prevent, report and fight it; and to strengthen the capacity of NGOs, citizens and the media to promote transparency and integrity. Participants committed to three principles – adopt an ethical compass, cultivate integrity and avoid grey areas – and received certificates.

Part 2 · Funds statements

Where the money came from in 2024, how it was spent, and how it is accounted for.



2024 FINANCIAL YEAR – NOT AUDITED

Financial review



This financial review covers the 2024 financial year. It is based on CERC's financial reports to RCN Justice & Démocratie and the agreement signed with this partner. Project accounts are kept in US dollars, on a cash basis. **The 2024 figures have not been audited.**

BY PROJECT

Funding in 2024

- **PARJ2 – REPLIC** (European Union and Belgian DGD, through RCN Justice & Démocratie) – CERC received and spent **US$19,295** for this partnership in 2024.

ALL PROJECTS

Consolidated statement – all projects

Income, expenditure and balances of all projects combined, for 2024 compared with 2023.

Income and expenditure	2024 US$	2023 US$
Income received		
GPE / Oxfam IBIS – Education Out Loud	–	68,816.00
USAID / IREX – Youth Excel, Phase 1	–	6,746.05
USAID / IREX – Youth Excel, Phase 2	–	71,169.16
RCN J&D – REPLIC (EU, DGD)	19,295.00	–
Total income received	**19,295.00**	**146,731.21**
Expenditure, all projects combined		
Programme activities	17,120.00	155,166.96
Direct project support (staff, travel and running costs)	2,000.00	54,986.82
Administration, audit and bank charges	175.00	23,413.70
Total expenditure	**19,295.00**	**233,567.48**
Income less expenditure	**0.00**	**–86,836.27**
Balance brought forward from the previous year	–	86,836.27
Balance carried forward to the next year	**0.00**	**0.00**

Statement of funds, by grant

For each grant: the balance brought forward, the funds received, the funds spent, the funds returned or transferred, and the balance carried forward.

Grant and donor	Brought forward US$	Received US$	Spent US$	Returned, transfers US$	Carried forward US$
2024					
REPLIC – Agir pour une justice redevable, plurielle et intègre au Congo European Union and Belgium (DGD), through RCN J&D · Not audited – Financial reports to RCN Justice & Démocratie	–	19,295.00	19,295.00	–	–
Total 2024	**–**	**19,295.00**	**19,295.00**	**–**	**–**

BUDGET

Budget and actual

Budget and actual, REPLIC 2024

	Budget US$	Actual US$	Rate
Running costs (office supplies, communication, bank charges)	175.00	175.00	100%

	Budget US$	Actual US$	Rate
Social alert system and civil society response	14,295.00	14,295.00	100%
Youth project incubator: journalism and university anti-corruption clubs	4,825.00	4,825.00	100%
Total	**19,295.00**	**19,295.00**	**100%**

Partnership agreement with RCN Justice & Démocratie of 1 April 2024 and its amendment of 12 August 2024 (budget US$19,295, €17,826.13); financial reports to RCN J&D.

RESTRICTED FUNDS

Funded projects

All of CERC's income in 2024 was restricted to projects.

Project	Donor	Received in	Funds received US$
Social alert system and Youth Project Incubator (PARJ2 – REPLIC)	European Union and Belgian Development Cooperation (DGD), through RCN Justice & Démocratie	2024	19,295

INCOME

Income

In 2024, CERC received **US$19,295** from RCN Justice & Démocratie for the PARJ2 – REPLIC partnership, agreed on 1 April and extended by the amendment of 12 August. Funds were transferred quarterly, based on the quarter's budget forecast and on justified expenditure.

EXPENDITURE

Expenditure

In 2024, CERC spent **US$19,295** on the PARJ2 – REPLIC partnership: US$175 on running costs, US$14,295 on the social alert and response system and US$4,825 on the Youth Anti-Corruption Project Incubator (note 1).

FUNDING POLICY

Our sources of funding

CERC is funded by institutional donors, directly or through partner organisations, through grants restricted to projects. Each project has its approved budget; CERC reports to its donors through narrative and financial reports with supporting documents, and project accounts are audited as each donor requires.

NOTE 1

PARJ2 – REPLIC partnership – expenditure 2024

Expenditure for the period from 1 April to 31 December 2024, by line of the agreement of 1 April 2024 as amended on 12 August 2024.

Item	US$
Running costs	**175.00**
Office supplies	55.00
Communication	60.00
Bank charges	60.00
Social alert system and response	**14,295.00**
Setting up the social alert system in communities	6,500.00
– communication for the 9 focal points (10 months)	2,250.00
– transport for the 9 focal points (10 months)	2,250.00

Item	US$
– supervision per diem	2,000.00
Civil society response to alerts in Kinshasa	7,795.00
– transport (advocacy meetings)	2,500.00
– media (press briefing or advocacy programme)	750.00
– legal assistance	3,000.00
– awareness raising	1,545.00
Youth anti-corruption project incubator	**4,825.00**
Journalism	1,000.00
Support to university anti-corruption clubs	3,825.00
Total expenditure 2024	**19,295.00**

Equivalent to €17,826.13.

Our partners



CERC thanks the partners who made this work possible in 2024: RCN Justice & Démocratie, the European Union and the Belgian Development Cooperation (DGD), the member organisations of the focal point network – ACVDP, PONJA PONJA, C4, GREM, COCOLUCO and AFEVOPHA –, the judicial authorities of Kalamu, Ndjili and Matete, the University of Kinshasa, the Pan-African University, Reverend Kim University, Bel Campus University, Habari RDC, APNAC DRC, ACAJ and the UNCAC Coalition.

RCN Justice & Démocratie

Global Civil Society Coalition for the UNCAC

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CERC is a registered non-governmental organisation (NGO), Registration number: 42579 (F.92), given Legal Personality by the Ministry of Justice: JUST/SG/20/21311/2021.

CERC holds Special Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) since 2021.