

Annual Accountable Now Reporting

OPENING STATEMENT	5
Why we exist and the global context	5
Why we have signed up to Accountable Now and why it is important	6
The process we undertook and key learnings	6
Plan for going forward	6
Our mission	6
Our Theory of Action	7
<i>Future actions</i>	7
What are your key strategic indicators for success and what is the involvement of stakeholders in developing these indicators?	8
Future actions	9
What progress has been achieved and difficulties encountered against these indicators over the reporting period?	9
<i>Future actions</i>	9
What were the significant events or changes in the organization/sector over the reporting period of relevance to governance and accountability?	10
<i>Future actions</i>	11
What have you done to ensure sustainability of work beyond the project cycle? What evidence do you have of success in this respect?	11
<i>Future actions</i>	12
What lessons have been learned in this period? How have the lessons been transparently shared among internal and external stakeholders? How do you plan to use these lessons to improve your work in future?	12
Future actions	13
<i>Leading by Example</i>	13
How do you demonstrate excellence around strategic priorities?	13
<i>Future actions</i>	14
What evidence is there that your expertise is recognized and welcomed by your peers, partners and other stakeholders?	14
<i>Future actions</i>	14
How does your Lab practice being inclusive and protecting human rights, including promoting women’s rights and gender equality?	15
<i>Future actions</i>	15
How do you minimise the Lab’s negative impacts on your stakeholders, especially partners and the people you work for? How does your organization protect those most	

susceptible to harassment, abuse, exploitation, or any other type of unacceptable conduct?	15
<i>Future actions</i>	16
How do you demonstrate responsible stewardship for the environment?	16
<i>Future actions</i>	17
List key stakeholders- what process do you use to identify them?	17
<i>Future actions</i>	18
How do you ensure you reach out to those who are impacted/ concerned by your work?	18
<i>Future actions</i>	19
How, specifically, do you maximize coordination with others operating in the same sectoral and geographic space, with special reference to national and local actors?	19
<i>Future actions</i>	20
How do you collect feedback from stakeholders? What evidence can you provide to demonstrate your organization is responsive to stakeholder feedback	20
<i>Future actions</i>	20
Provide evidence to show stakeholder engagement throughout the project cycle, including in decision making processes.	21
<i>Future actions</i>	22
What is some of the positive and negative feedback your organization has received from stakeholders? What have you done to take these into account? (Or, how have you incorporated them in future plans?	22
<i>Future actions</i>	24
How do you ensure partners you work with, including individuals and organizations, retain the capacity they have gained beyond the project cycle?	24
<i>Future actions</i>	24
How do you identify and gather evidence regarding the root causes of the problems you address and use this to support your advocacy positions?	25
<i>Future actions</i>	25
How do you ensure the intended/targeted stakeholders support your advocacy work and value the resulting changes?	25
<i>Future actions</i>	25
Are annual budgets, policies, evaluations, executive remuneration and vital statistics about the organization easily available? Provide links and highlight membership in initiatives such as IATI.	26
<i>Future actions</i>	26
What policies do you have in place to ensure a fair pay scale? Do you measure the gender pay gap in your organization, and if so, what is it? What are the salaries of the five most senior positions in the organization and what is the ratio between the top and bottom salaries?	26
<i>Future actions</i>	26
How do you ensure privacy rights and protect personal data?	27

<i>Future actions</i>	27
Who are the five largest single donors and what is the monetary value of their contributions? Where private individual donors cannot be named due to requested anonymity, please explain what safeguards are in place to ensure that anonymous contributions do not have an unfair influence on organizational activities.	28
Provide evidence that recruitment and employment is fair and transparent.	29
What are you doing to invest in staff development? What indicators demonstrate your progress? What are your plans to improve?	29
<i>Future actions</i>	30
How does your organization ensure a safe working environment for everybody, including one free of sexual harassment, abuse, exploitation or any other unacceptable conduct? What indicators demonstrate your progress? What are your plans to improve?	30
<i>Future actions</i>	30
<i>Resources are handled effectively</i>	31
How do you acquire resources in line with your values and globally accepted standards and without compromising your independence?	31
<i>Future actions</i>	31
How do you monitor progress against strategic objectives? Have you re-allocated resources to optimize impact?	31
<i>Future actions</i>	31
How do you minimize the risk of corruption, bribery or misuse of funds? Which financial controls do you have in place? What do you do when controls fail? Describe a relevant situation that occurred in this reporting period?	32
<i>Future actions</i>	32
What is your governance structure and what policies/practices guide replacing and recruiting new trustees/board members	32
<i>Future actions</i>	33
How does your board oversee the adherence to policies, resources allocation, potential risks and processes for complaints and grievances?	33
<i>Future actions</i>	33
What processes and mechanisms does your lab have in place to handle external complaints, including those relating to unacceptable conduct? Please provide an overview of the number and nature of complaints in the reporting period, their validity and how they were handled	33
<i>Future actions</i>	33
How are internal complaints handled? Please provide an overview of the number and nature of complaints in the reporting period. How many of those were valid, and of those that were valid, how were they handled?	34
<i>Future actions</i>	34
How do you make decisions about the need for confidentiality and protecting the anonymity of those involved	34
<i>Future actions</i>	34

<i>Leadership is dedicated to fulfilling the 12 commitments</i>	34
How is the governing body and management held accountable for fulfilling their strategic promises, including on accountability?	34
<i>Future actions</i>	34
What steps have you taken to ensure staff are included in discussing progress toward commitments to organizational accountability?	35
What is your accountability reports scope of coverage? What authority or influence do you have over national entities and how, specifically, are you using it to ensure compliance with the accountability commitments and to drive the overall accountability agenda?	35

OPENING STATEMENT

[Accountability Lab](#) (AL) was founded in early 2012 as an effort to work with young people to develop new ideas for accountability, transparency and open government. It has evolved into a global network of local Accountability Labs that are finding new ways to shift societal norms, solve intractable challenges and build “unlikely networks” for change.

As of April 2020, AL the network includes [Nepal](#) and [Liberia](#) (since 2012), [Pakistan](#) (2015), [Mali](#) and [Nigeria](#) (2017), [Niger](#) and [South Africa](#) (2018), [Mexico](#) (2019), and [Zimbabwe](#) (2020). We also run Integrity Icon with partners in [Sri Lanka](#), [Morocco](#), [Ukraine](#) and the [US](#).

All teams work together to achieve the Lab’s overall mission to make governance work for people by supporting active citizens, responsible leaders and accountable institutions Our vision is a world in which resources are used wisely, decisions benefit everyone fairly, and people lead secure lives.

Why we exist and the global context

Accountability Lab was set up in response to the growing accountability needs and challenges facing young people around the world. The Lab works to support young change-makers to build accountability and integrity in their communities. Since we began 8 years ago the mission has stayed the same but the approach has evolved, as demonstrated in our evolving [Theory of Change](#).

At the outset the core work of the Lab was what has now evolved into the Accountability Incubator and falls under a broader bucket of work called [AL Knowledge](#). There have since been three key clarifications in our thinking. First, a deliberate emphasis on positive approaches and positive deviants - through [AL Campaigns](#) like [Integrity Icon](#) we work directly with reformers within government. Second, we place a particular emphasis on coalition and community building - connecting the dots between change-makers and facilitating collective action. And third, a focus on [adaptive learning](#) - to collect information on what works, what does not and why; using this to both improve what we do and inform the field more broadly. We remain convinced that the issues we were set up to address remain more important than ever - and in need of approaches of this sort.

AL increasingly sees itself as a facilitator, storyteller and field-builder through an emphasis on accountability as a value rather than a theme. This allows us to develop deep and unlikely networks in the countries in which we work; and meaningfully bring together diverse sets of stakeholders to collectively push for change in ways very few organizations can do - from [artists](#) to government officials to journalists. Accountability touches upon [anti-corruption](#), human rights, [peacebuilding](#), [service delivery](#), [gender](#) and many other topics - by connecting those who would not traditionally speak to one another, we open up new avenues for action. We understand that others are well placed to do the hard work of building accountability and integrity - we seek to support them to develop the knowledge, tools and communities they need to be successful over time.

For the same reason, we also see ourselves as an accountability storytelling organization that can tell stories through an intersectional lens - challenging stereotypes and engaging on the realities around race, class and gender in countries in which we work, and how these relate to accountability and transparency issues.

We believe that we are an organization that is uniquely able to connect dots at varied levels - from communities on the ground, to Ministers or CEOs. This allows us to identify how and why change might take place, and inform local, national and international efforts to generate positive change. We pride ourselves on our creativity and our flexibility - remaining nimble, even while growing - to adapt quickly and take advantage of moments where there are opportunities to bolster accountability.

Internally, we bring people into our teams who have very different kinds of lived realities of accountability and we aim to model the unlikely networks and live the values we hope to build, explaining as we go why this is important.

Why we have signed up to Accountable Now and why it is important

AL sees itself as a values-driven organization. In an effort to both live and demonstrate these values, we are looking for a way to measure, share and improve our own accountability. The Global Standard on CSO Accountability is a useful tool for the AL to adopt for two reasons: to measure our own accountability as an organization, but also to share with others the challenges of establishing and maintaining standards across nine affiliates with different levels of resources, socio-political environments and proximity to power, etc. While the Global Standard serves as a reference, we believe that there is an important role for us as an organization to operationalize the Global Standard across all of the contexts in which we work.

The process we undertook and key learnings

AL is not, nor was it envisioned as, an international non-government organisation (INGO). Instead, we see ourselves as a *translocal network*, a collective of local organisations that have a shared purpose and understanding about the challenges we face and what we believe are the creative solutions required to solve them. AL is globally active, visible and connected in the sense that across all the Labs we share principles, narratives of change and practices, yet we remain local in the sense that we manifest ourselves- sometimes very differently- in the adoption and translation of principles and ideas into specific local contexts.

AL was interested to report on the standards as a global organization, i.e. not just the DC office. With agreement from Country Directors, we built the Accountable Now self-assessment – which is based on the Global Standard 12 commitments – into the annual signing of the cooperation agreements between AL Global and each country affiliate. Practically, the self-assessment process is a 2-hour recorded conversation between the AL Executive Director, the Country Director and one member each of the global and local boards. Each country team will have its own mini-report, which will contribute to a bigger report that will be submitted to Accountable Now. Beyond our commitment to Accountable Now, this exercise also helps us identify where the gaps or needs are within our teams and where they need the most support, or where they can support one another. So, we may find out -for instance- that we are spending a lot of time on fiscal accountability issues, when we should be focusing on supporting teams to work on accountability and people with disabilities, or on gender and environmental accountability. While there is a minimum standard which every Lab must meet, they are also free to decide which Global Standard commitments they would like to focus on for the coming year, so not everyone has to do everything all the time.

2019 was the first time that AL went through this process; all conversations have been recorded and reports are written up, the final validation report will soon be sent to the AL board for approval.

Plan for going forward

AL will undertake this process on an annual basis, using the first report as a baseline to measure our ability to address challenges, opportunities and cross organizational learnings identified over time. These reports will also be shared with our Board of Directors on an annual basis as a way for them to better understand our progress and accountability commitments. Finally, these reports will be posted on our website with an invitation to the public to provide feedback or ideas on how we can improve.

Blair Glencorse

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Blair Glencorse'.

Our mission

The Lab’s mission is to make governance work for people through supporting active citizens, responsible leaders and accountable institutions.

Our Theory of Action

We have developed [several theories of change](#) (ToC), with the present iteration now referred to as our Theory of Action, over the lifetime of the Accountability Lab. We are proud of the fact that our understanding of our work is evolving as we iterate and learn. At any given time, we are also trying to test more than one theory of change within a given context. Accountability relates to complex social and political dynamics and building it requires multiple inter-related activities- it is not linear, nor is it singular. Our efforts are just one part of the process of change we hope to see.

We view a theory of change not just as a way to map out inputs, outputs and outcomes but as a way to understand in practical terms the causality between them; and to support double loop learning (learning that recognizes that the way a problem is defined and solved can be a source of the problem itself). As a result our theory of change is not an agreed, defined diagram – it is a living document that we amend and refine over time as we learn on the ground.



The current AL theory of action, which was developed in 2019, as part of the 2020 – 2023 strategy development process is a culmination of a process of learning, engagement across our Labs and continuous validation with stakeholder and peer organizations. While we are satisfied that this theory of action is representative of our work, we are aware that this is very likely to change at some point in the future as we learn and grow, and respond to the prevailing challenges and opportunities facing the accountability space.

Future actions

- Remain vigilant to the changing local and global dynamics around our conceptualization of the work that we do and change we are attempting to make. Continue to iterate as necessary.
- Teams integrate the theory of action into their work and use it as a means to talk about our work with donors, partners, the media, and other stakeholders.

What are your key strategic indicators for success and what is the involvement of stakeholders in developing these indicators?

As a network:

AL is working towards three primary objectives:

1. Shifting norms to ensure that integrity becomes the expected behaviour within societies;
2. Equipping reformers -with the knowledge and tools to push for better governance;
3. Influencing policies, processes and practices, through growing coalition and advocating for change

On a programmatic level across all network Labs, the following key indicators for success are used (in combination with others) to measure the efficacy of our work against the three objectives outlined:

- Changes in policies, practices and regulations in spaces where reformers who participate in our programs work and advocate;
- The extent to which program participants are (1) better equipped with knowledge and skills to advocate for policy changes; (2) have a better understanding of policy processes and accountability mechanisms; and (3) perceive growth in their own ability to influences policies, processes and practices; and
- The extent to which networks of people collaborate and push for change collectively.

Read more about our measurement processes and indicators [here](#). We understand our impact in relation to the goals and approaches outlined above- and that our impact is as much about learning as anything else. We know that supporting a new generation of active citizens and responsible leaders is a long-term, complex and non-linear process and cannot always be measured by pre-determined log-frames or matrices. We gather quantitative data and carry out qualitative surveys and real-time data collection processes- and we work hard to synthesize these to improve what we (and hopefully others) do. Ultimately, we understand learning itself as a core key performance indicator. Given our emphasis on convening and field-building as mentioned above, we see our impact as much in what we can help others achieve as what we can do ourselves. Collective impact has to come from shared efforts.

We are driven to create more inclusive and accountable societies by witnessing injustice and a lack of integrity every day; and by the incredible creativity and energy we see- among young people in particular- to change these dynamics. Wherever they find themselves- in communities, government, civil society or elsewhere- they have the ideas to generate change, but often need support to make it happen. That is the role we see for the AL.

In terms of communicating impact, there is often incredible work happening on the ground, but many organizations are unable to explain or translate this impact and place it within the larger context. MEL Managers across all teams meet regularly to share information, lessons and impact horizontally and vertically- meaning that we can we story-tell and push for change at multiple levels, allowing us to punch above our weight.

Network Labs:

Stakeholder involvement in program development is at the core of every activity, since all programs are developed in response to local conversations and cross-network learning. The broader challenge for us is our ability to document this involvement in a way that can be pin-pointed and replicated across contexts. Some teams have undertaken a stakeholder mapping process to better document

how specific stakeholders have contributed to individual interventions (Pakistan), while others (South Africa) developed a [film fellowship](#) as a result of an overwhelming response to a programmatic need. In Nepal the [Civic Action Team's](#) participants have extensively impacted how the program is run by organizing themselves and [providing feedback](#) for programmatic improvements. In Liberia, several women's advocacy groups were formed as part of their Reel Peace program and continue to be active beyond the project cycle.

On a programmatic level, teams have identified common strategic indicators, and Objectives and Key Results (OKRs) at the organizational level. Oftentimes however, these indicators are intangible and can be difficult to quantify, such as changing motivations and behaviours or creating ecosystems to nurture and develop ideas. Involvement with stakeholders in developing these indicators is mixed among teams.

Future actions

- Share highlights and specific learnings from MEL engagements across teams and write publicly about these lessons;
- As part of the 2020-2023 strategy, we will centralise our data management – see operations plan;
- Country teams document how stakeholder interventions impact and contribute to program development.

What progress has been achieved and difficulties encountered against these indicators over the reporting period?

We recognize the importance of being able to measure our impact against the key indicators outlined in the previous section in an accurate and consistent manner. We continue to build our MEL capacity across all country teams. Building the staff and resources needed to deepen our learning and improve the quality of our data remains a challenge. As an example, we gather program participants feedback on the extent to which our programming equipped them with relevant skills and tools through self-assessment surveys. Increased resources for more rigorous assessment through evaluations and more involved, time-intensive data gathering like interviews and focus groups would give us a much better sense of participants' learning journeys in trainings for example; and the exact elements of our curricula that yields the most impact in a specific setting.

Measuring behavior shifts is not easy, and important changes are almost always only seen after a project cycle is complete, as our work often relies on long-term advocacy, network building and influence exerted by reformers. Our stakeholders are also very likely to be people who are already working on integrity and accountability issues in their workplace or community, albeit potentially in a less organized way, which means that attribution or [contribution](#) to the Lab's intervention adds an additional challenge. Recognizing the need to fine tune our indicators and improve our ability to measure our progress, we [partnered with experts on social norms in anti-corruption efforts](#) at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University to assist us in enhancing our own understanding of the changes we seek to measure, and help us build an implementable MEL framework around norm shifts specifically.

Future actions

- As part of the 2020-2023 strategy, we will centralise our data management – see operations plan.
- We will build out learning partnerships with key academic institutions and CSOs in 2020 to better understand how to learn around our work;

- We will continue to seek a better understanding of how our programming can contribute to the change we want to see by partnering with specialists across the academic and advocacy spaces.

What were the significant events or changes in the organization/sector over the reporting period of relevance to governance and accountability?

Global Trends

Accountability Lab began at a time of exciting movements within the field of accountability and transparency- new approaches were developing, new tools seemed to herald the potential for large-scale change and international initiatives like the Open Government Partnership and the Global Partnership for Social Accountability were generating greater buy-in to these issues.

Since then, the global political and economic context has evolved dramatically and we have tried to adapt accordingly. Some important progress has been made in the places we work in terms of civic participation, community engagement and innovation in governance- and many lessons have been learned. But the trend overall has been largely negative. With the rise of nationalist politics, we have seen increasing threats to open societies; and despite rising fears about issues like immigration and climate change, there has been a continued lack of accountability of many in government. NGOs and civil society organizations have lost credibility as a result of well-known scandals, and recent polls show a deep lack of confidence in the work of these kinds of organizations. Legitimacy- of all sorts- is declining. The global youth population is growing rapidly but young people, women and other minority groups are still largely excluded from decision-making; citizens everywhere are losing the sense that they can play a role in changing these dynamics; and it continues to be very difficult to ensure laws are reflected in practices that support accountability.

In our work, we see this manifesting itself in a number of interrelated ways: deep disillusionment among young people with political systems that have generated widely disparate outcomes for a small elite versus a large majority; an obvious disconnect between the incredible ideas, networks and creativity of citizens and the systems- local, national and international- through which processes of inclusive change can take place; a sense of isolation and an inability among change-makers to come together and collectively push for the reforms they want to see. These challenges are serious and have real implications for people's lives. Our work in countries such as Mali and Niger indicates a direct link between a lack of accountability and insecurity that has been exacerbated by some donor interventions. And when we speak to people everywhere- through our Civic Action Teams for example- we continue to hear that it is a deficit of governance that drives problems ranging from migration to lack of public services to inadequate justice systems. All of this affects the way the Accountability Lab works.

The field of accountability, transparency and open government has also evolved dramatically. The initial optimism placed on the idea that greater transparency would lead directly to accountability has faded; the promise of technology for opening up decision-making and politics has been shown to be a double-edged sword; and many social accountability processes have proven unable to shift larger political systems. The idea of building movements has risen to the fore, but difficult questions about the legitimacy and roles of NGOs and donors in this process are yet to be fully answered. At the same time, the broader landscape has become dramatically more crowded, with a variety of organizations doing everything from promoting participatory budgeting to monitoring contracting to supporting grassroots legal efforts. Where larger frameworks and collaboratives (which themselves have proliferated) have sought to bring disparate actors together there have been questions about inclusivity, reach and legitimacy.

AL Country Level Trends

Corruption: At the sectoral level, corruption continues to be a huge problem. In Liberia there was a big scandal around \$25 million in state funds that went [missing](#) in 2019. In better news in Liberia, the Senate advised by Open Government Partnership (OGP) champions supported by AL Liberia, approved the use of an electronic vote monitoring system. The country is also reviewing the whistleblower act to see how witness protection can be strengthened to meet international standards and are also helping complete Liberia's OGP National Action Plan.

Closing Civic Space: Scrutiny is not limited to public/government entities in the countries in which we work either. Accountability of NGOs, for instance, is being questioned by the Mexican President. Government restructuring after federalization is impacting AL Nepal's work as they now work across various levels of government. As a result, AL Nigeria is looking at their safety and security procedures based on what they have learned during work in insecure parts of the country. Similarly, AL Nepal is revising their internal governance policies.

South Africa has a new President, who is seen as a reformer and is likely to engage with civil society which will likely provide an opportunity for the organization to get a foothold in and contribute to better accountability and governance.

AL teams are working to localize the AL global strategy and changing their team/board compositions and working modalities, and revising their operations/working procedures to reflect local issues (Nigeria, Liberia, Nepal, South Africa). AL South Africa has registered as a local entity, which changes the ways the team can raise funds.

Future actions

- Network Labs to conduct ongoing political-economy analysis to understand the Lab's fit within their specific contexts;
- Country teams to localize the 2020-2023 AL Global Strategy as well as AL's general operational policies.

What have you done to ensure sustainability of work beyond the project cycle? What evidence do you have of success in this respect?

AL programs are designed to be self-reinforcing, sustainable and to continue long after the project end date. Each intervention is intended to develop key skills of program participants, and act as a vehicle to gain skills on how to start conversations and take action no matter the theme. For example, the [Civic Action Teams](#) (CivActs) have been deployed to address issues around natural resource management (Liberia and Nigeria), migration (Nepal), countering violent extremism (Mali). In Nepal, 3 districts have now allocated local budgets to support the sustainability and growth of the process; and in Liberia, one result of the CivActs was the reduction in violent protests in targeted mining communities by almost 90% as the teams built trust and cooperation with mining companies. Beyond programmatic sustainability, the CivActs program relies heavily on training local enumerators who are not only able to use data to strengthen advocacy efforts, but who also in and of themselves are recognized as sources of accurate information and as conveners in their communities as a result of their participation in the program. These skills and this trust remain beyond the program cycle as these individuals continue to participate in grass roots problem-solving and advocacy.

Through the [Accountability Incubator](#) and fellowship programs, participants share and develop skills to work independently once they graduate. AL Pakistan has reported that 30-40% of accountpreneurs are working independently and have been able to raise funds and build their networks. In Nigeria, the team has partnered with [Chocolate City](#) for the [Voice2Rep](#) project through which first time musicians have long-term connections and mentors within the music industry. Accountability Labs in Pakistan, Nepal, Nigeria and Liberia have set up [Open GovHubs](#) as a way to cover the costs of operations and promote AL's mission through peer networks.

Future actions

- Continue to prioritise sustainability and skills building among program participants and partners in the design of new projects;
- Continue to think through at the country level how we can generate revenue streams for our work while maintaining a focus on our core strategic objectives.

What lessons have been learned in this period? How have the lessons been transparently shared among internal and external stakeholders? How do you plan to use these lessons to improve your work in future?

We have learned several overarching lessons that have informed our thinking around our new strategy. We now understand that Accountability Lab should focus on:

Positivity not Negativity- approaches to accountability, transparency and anticorruption tend to focus on the problems and the perpetrators. This can reinforce collective perceptions of widespread wrong-doing and perpetuate disengagement. We take a positive approach- “naming and faming” rather than “naming and shaming”- lifting people up and supporting solutions wherever we can.

Individuals then Organizations- building accountability cannot be simply a process of creating and enforcing laws. It requires a focus on accountability agents, as well as accountability organizations or actions- which is very different to traditional approaches in this field. We work to connect these agents in ways that allow them to build coalitions for change within organizations, shift norms among institutions and strengthen their collective identity and energy.

Unlikely Networks not just Usual Suspects- the accountability and transparency field can at times be confused by overly technical language and approaches. This prevents different, dynamic voices and people from becoming part of larger efforts to create change. We’ve learned that as we build “unlikely networks” among civil society, government officials, musicians, creatives, technologists, film-makers and others, we can open up accountability work and generate much greater engagement around core issues.

Inside Out not just Outside In- our work to date has focused largely on civil society and young people outside government who have been working to push for greater accountability. But through Integrity Icon in particular, we have now developed a much deeper understanding of and support for reformers inside government connecting them to each other and to those outside government to work together for reform. Accountability has to be a collective effort.

Bottom Up and Top Down- we have worked from communities upwards, mobilizing citizens- armed with knowledge and ideas- to push for reform from the local level. This remains an incredibly important part of how change happens- but it needs to be matched with coherent strategies for change from the top-downwards too. If we, along with partners, can bring together new ideas and energy from the grassroots and the “grasstops”, we can shift the ways decisions are made.

Them not Us- we spent the first 5 years or so of our efforts building the structures, approaches and brand around the Accountability Lab, positioning ourselves as a leading organization working on these issues. Now, we understand more clearly that our role is not about the Lab itself- it is about creating the space for others, collaborating in meaningful ways, crowding in other people and ideas, leading from behind where we can and acting as a convener and facilitator of change.

Partnerships not Isolated Actions- work in this space is too often disparate and uncoordinated, and as a result, less effective than it could be. In keeping with the above, we work to map where others intervene and link our efforts to those that are working at different points in accountability systems to amplify change. For example, in Nepal, Liberia, Nigeria, Mali and Pakistan our Civic Action Teams collect information from community members and coordinate with local governments, private sector actors and networks for CSOs to co-create solutions to critical challenges with these

communities. Or in Liberia, Pakistan, Nepal, Nigeria and Mali, through our Accountability Incubator, we source local ideas for accountability but then connect them to donors and government officials who can partner with them to ensure scale-up over time.

Long-term Efforts not Quick-Fixes- we understand there are no quick fixes. Building accountability takes time- it is a generational effort. We have made important progress in building trust in communities and deep networks that can provide the basis for sustained engagement over time. The challenge is maintaining these in the face of other incentives (including funding, in many cases) that tend to focus on short-term, output driven measures of success.

These lessons are shared through our daily interactions with those we come into contact with and heavily inform the way that we deliver and develop our programs.

As noted in a recent blog, sustainability and accountability are [expensive](#) and time consuming. We continue to invest in documenting and sharing lessons across our teams on issues such as the importance of maintaining comprehensive documentation; growing, preserving and developing our network; diversifying funding streams; developing emergency funds; identifying specific indicators for internal and external assessments; and ensuring compliance with management standards.

We are getting better at documenting and keeping records of our work for the purposes of institutional memory. Learnings are shared internally through regular/weekly meetings and we facilitate interactions for team building and project management purposes. Additionally, some teams have instituted [quarterly reviews](#) for more thorough conversations around progress. These sessions include all staff, which allows for improved tracking and planning of programs and finances simultaneously, and increases teams' ability to identify bottlenecks, operations and cash flow challenges in advance. Bringing all team members into learning conversations also aligns with our goal of cultivating a culture of learning across all of our country teams, which helps us distribute the responsibility of gathering data, input or feedback for learning purposes among team members, especially where formal MEL capacity is low.

Future actions

- Country teams to store documents and files on country team Google drives;
- Country teams to create reserve funds of 3-6 months of operating costs;
- Global team to host learning call for country teams local stakeholder mapping;
- Country teams to increase their external sharing through blog posts, podcasts and infographics to add to the field more broadly;
- Non-MEL staff members to be drawn into review processes across all teams to cultivate a culture of learning and build our internal capacity.

Leading by Example

How do you demonstrate excellence around strategic priorities?

Accountability Lab ensures that strategic priorities- as outlined in our strategy- are at the core of everything we do. We believe that excellence is closely tied to [legitimacy](#) which in turn is shaped by what an organization does and how they do it, including three core elements: downward accountability, transparency and political independence. At the Lab, we try our best to be transparent in everything we do- with all of our core [documents, financials and policies open](#) and online at any given time. Around the world, we place a premium on building systems; sharing lessons across countries through [monthly open calls](#); meeting global standards when it comes to issues such as financial management; and staying out of politics. We also use international frameworks where feasible- such as the Open Government Partnership, for example- as umbrellas under which we can push for change; while also making sure that the issues concerned are

understood in a way that resonates locally. With the Open Government Partnership (OGP) for example, we have made the case that open government is as much about efficiency as it is about transparency. Talking with our colleagues, the other element we feel strongly about is taking a positive approach to our work at all times— we find holding up others and offering solutions is more politically feasible than the opposite, especially in places where civic space may be under threat.

Future actions

- Continue to share learning publicly through blogs, webinars and other outreach efforts around how we are working towards strategic priorities and what this might mean for others;
- Further engage all Network Labs in conversations about strategic priorities on an ongoing basis.

What evidence is there that your expertise is recognized and welcomed by your peers, partners and other stakeholders?

AL works hard to build relevant coalitions and communities around accountability, transparency and open government at the local, national and international levels. We do this by channelling ideas upwards to inform and influence policies and practices. These efforts have been globally recognised and we are often invited to share our thoughts at the global level including through the [Open Government Partnership](#) as a process for the co-creation of goals related to accountability and open government; and the [World Economic Forum](#) as a means to influence private sector efforts around anti-corruption.

AL is seen as an innovative and influential partner by a variety of governments and donors and the team has received positive feedback from those they have worked with at all levels. This has translated into [media coverage](#), [learning opportunities](#) and [accolades](#) as well as opportunities to speak at high profile events such as the [UN](#) General Assembly, the Skoll World Forum and the [OGP](#) annual meeting.

This is also the case at the country level. This year, AL Nigeria organized the OGP Nigeria Youth Summit and developed a youth inclusion strategy supporting the 2nd National Action Plan, for example. They have also successfully encouraged other civil societies working with young people to engage in platforms like OGP.

AL South Africa now sits on the National Anti-Corruption Reference Group which is drafting a strategy to fight corruption and inform anti-corruption policy. Our Country Director in South Africa also sits on an advisory group to the President.

AL Liberia is working with the federal government to develop the country's OGP National Action Plan (NAP). Our team has recommended looking for champions within the government who are also reformers and changemakers and can take AL's ideas forward. They also recommended that the advising CSOs group themselves into thematic coalitions in order to generate buy-in from different ministries on the NAP.

Future actions

- Country teams to track invitations to speak at events, media coverage, webinars, conferences, etc. as well as participate in high level meetings, committees, groups, etc;
- Accountability Lab to work to integrate our thinking into additional global advocacy processes around these issues such as the C20/G20 process.

How does your Lab practice being inclusive and protecting human rights, including promoting women's rights and gender equality?

Internal - We prioritize inclusion and human rights across AL. Depending on the social composition and historical context, teams ensure that we recruit people to ensure racial, gender and ethnic diversity across all levels of programming and management. The % of female Country Directors has increased 25% in the past 2 years while the majority of second tier staff are women. AL South Africa and AL Mexico have all women teams, and AL South Africa has an all-female Board of Directors. Read more about our goals in terms of inclusion [here](#).

AL has robust safeguarding, duty of care, social media and equity [policies](#) which are reviewed regularly. We do not speak/participate on male-only panels, and have put financial resources behind opportunities for women and Global South staff members to participate in workshops and conferences. All AL offices prioritize gender equality in their selection and hiring process. To ensure regional representation, teams are actively encouraging more people to apply as interns from excluded regions of their countries (such as northern Nigeria, for example).

Partnerships - Within local communities, our teams place a particular emphasis on partnering with organizations working with people from minority groups, including albino, transgender people and people with disabilities (Liberia and Mali). We ensure racial and gender diversity on selection panels and campaign participants (Integrity Icon and Voice/ Rap 2 Rep). AL Nigeria has maintained female representation in their programs with 60-70 percent Icons, Voice2Rep participants and SDG participants being female. For the Integrity Icon Summit, AL Mexico ensured not only gender inclusion, but also different political views and agendas. AL Liberia includes at least 50 percent women in their community engagement, which they track through data collection processes on a regular basis.

Program Participants - The Inclusion Cafe run by iCampus (OpenGov Hub Liberia) and supported by AL Liberia is operated by people with disabilities. The Cafe is a safe space for marginalized communities and has a variety of resources and activities specifically tailored for those communities.

Future actions

- AL will continue to strengthen and ensure regular reporting on gender and minority group targets across all teams.
- All staff and board members participate in safeguarding training within three months of starting at the Lab. All staff participate in an annual refresh led by safeguarding leads.

How do you minimise the Lab's negative impacts on your stakeholders, especially partners and the people you work for? How does your organization protect those most susceptible to harassment, abuse, exploitation, or any other type of unacceptable conduct?

Safeguarding for children and youth, preventing sexual harassment against women and minority groups, mitigating external risks are all issues which teams have committed to take into consideration in their work. All teams have adopted AL Global's anti-harassment and whistleblower [policies](#). Leadership communicates and cascades these policies to team members, program partners and relevant stakeholders. Regardless of where staff work, all staff members sign that they have read, understand and will abide by the code of conduct, staff handbook, gender and equity policy and social media policy when they join the organization.

AL Nigeria ensures that all vendors are familiar with these policies and procedures and abide by them. AL Nepal does regular risk assessments and has a safe environment committee, which is drafting a guidebook. With their film fellowship, AL South Africa educates fellows on child and vulnerable group safeguarding since some of them produce stories that involve children.

AL Niger holds regular staff discussion to review administrative procedures and requirements; engages with donors, their Board of Directors and updates Board committees on potential challenges; immediately communicates with relevant parties if highly sensitive information has been negligently stored; ensures procedures are followed and analyzed to avoid future incidents; regularly reviews security measures; and maintains good relations with the emergency responders, the police and the community.

Future actions

- All staff and board members participate in safeguarding training within three months of starting at the Lab. All staff participate in an annual refresh led by safeguarding leads;
- AL will set up closed loop whistleblower processes and add a reporting mechanism to our website.

How do you demonstrate responsible stewardship for the environment?

Accountability Lab recognises that its day-to-day operations impact the environment in a number of ways. Accountability Lab is therefore committed to minimise the potentially harmful effects of its activities wherever and whenever possible.

While we have limited budgets to reach the very highest standards of compliance, we are slowly working to include environmental standards in our grant and country level budgets. Each team member is responsible and accountable for their contribution to reducing Accountability Lab's carbon footprint. The team is asked to continuously contribute to identifying and implementing opportunities to this effect. The policy will be regularly developed to reflect our measures towards more environmentally sustainable practices.

From 2020 onwards, the emissions caused by plane travels for the Accountability Lab, Board Trustees funded participants will be compensated by Accountability Lab. We will compensate air travel through platforms including [atmosfair](#) or [MyClimate](#).

Offsetting costs will be considered in all budgeting processes. All meeting and project participants will be encouraged to also compensate for their flights.

While acknowledging the importance of personal contact and face-to-face dialogue, Accountability Lab tries to minimise the number of trips and seeks to find the most environmentally friendly flight routes in planning travel. Video and teleconferencing is also used to the greatest extent possible to reduce the amount of travel required. On business trips, Accountability Lab staff should use public transport where safe and possible. Board meetings are held in person only once per year to offset environmental costs, and wherever possible meetings should be held online.

The Accountability Lab as far as possible, and where available only uses recycled paper for office printing. When printing for internal use Accountability Lab prints in black and white (unless colour printing is absolutely necessary for readability) and double-sided. All staff members have changed their printers' settings accordingly. They are asked to think twice before printing for desk use or for internal meetings.

Where the Accountability Lab has offices in country we endeavor as far as possible to: turn off lights, heating and cooling in rooms not in use, especially meeting rooms; unplug all unutilized electronic equipment such as computer plugs before leaving the office; when the heating is on, instead of keeping windows half-open all day, opt to fully open the windows for several minutes several times a day.

At Accountability Lab events like Board meetings or workshops, we serve meals and drinks in recyclable/ reusable containers. Where possible, tap water will be provided. All waste is separated as far as possible. At internal and external events, we aim to only supply reusable dishes.

Accountability Lab attempts as far as possible to stop the delivery of physical copies of bank statements, mailings etc.

Our Country Director for AL Nepal comes from a forestry background and has been pushing for a variety of environmentally-friendly initiatives. The Kathmandu office segregates waste into trash and compost and has planted trees within the office compound. In the last three years, they have managed to significantly reduce their use of paper, and they plan to go paperless besides for the finance unit. They have formed a team on environmentally-friendly policies within the Kathmandu Open Gov Hub. They also communicate these values to others in the communities in which they work. For instance, they noticed a lot of plastic water bottles were being used during a sector event, so they shared their handbook on environmental practices with the organizers to encourage them to think about implementing environmentally-friendly policies for their events.

Future actions

- Country teams to formalize environmental-friendly practices and report on them on an annual basis;
- Complete AL Nepal environment handbook and share with other teams to ensure we avoid negative spillover effects in terms of the environment.

List key stakeholders- what process do you use to identify them?

Over the past 8 years, we have worked to connect our efforts at the ground-level to larger reform processes at the local, national, regional and international levels. We understand that change happens on multiple levels and through multiple avenues. As a result, we actively seek to develop coalitions and networks with individuals, non-government groups, civil society partners, government agencies and unlikely actors by connecting dots in ways that can lead to long-term change in communities. Expanding and developing stakeholders and partnerships is a key aspect of our [AL Communities](#) vertical. We are not so focused on what a partner does on a day to day basis so much as that we share similar values as it pertains to the particular programmatic/ campaign outcome. In an effort to determine whether or not we share similar values – partnership/ stakeholder relations are guided by a [partnership policy](#).

We have divided our stakeholders into four key groups:

Civil Society - For example, the Integrity Icon campaign is designed as a collective, jointly owned effort that can be used by a variety of different civil society groups to support their own integrity-related goals. We rely on coalitions in each country to support the campaign such as [Corruption Watch](#) or [BudgIt](#) and smaller, dynamic groups like [Activate!](#).

Government - this includes national, federal and local government agencies in charge of anti-corruption/governance, health, education, justice, security, and the public/civil service. We are working with the Icons and within their agencies and ministries to support the winners of the Integrity Icon campaign. As a result, we have formed partnerships with the DPSA in South Africa and the Ministry of Justice and the Office of the Statistician General in Nigeria, for example. We have also formed close ties with critical line ministries such as the Civil Service training academy in Pakistan, and the Ministry of Migration and Foreign Employment in Nepal. Going forwards we would like to further build out these ties and develop partnerships where feasible with ministries including the Department of Justice in South Africa and the Public Service Institute in Nigeria.

Business - We have worked with a variety of corporate actors to date in these contexts, including BMW (South Africa), Deloitte (South Africa) and Pathfinder Group (Pakistan). Going forwards, we realise that any work around accountability in countries such as Nigeria and South Africa has to recognize issues of corporate accountability, state-capture and anti-corruption; and have begun finding creative ways to bring them into our unlikely networks and campaigns. We are looking to

build out a business accountability incubator in South Africa which will also adapt our incubator methodology for young people- in social enterprises, corporates or state-owned enterprises- that have innovative ideas for building integrity within their organizations. In Liberia, Orange Liberia helped us create a [Tech4Women Hackathon](#) at iCampus aimed at cultivating problem-solving skills and encouraging young women to use technology as a means to address social issues.

Other (unlikely networks) - including media, creatives, academia, religious and tribal leaders, think tanks, artists and designers. We have developed important partnerships across our countries with the media- in South Africa, for example with News24, and where we are working towards building partnerships with the Mail and Guardian, and Community Media. We have also grown our reach through partnerships with networks of bloggers who make content available in local languages, such as [Benbere](#) in Mali. In Liberia we have developed a New Media Lab which supports musicians and spoken word artists to produce music and podcasts about accountability and integrity as a way to increase our reach amongst young people and those who would traditionally not engage with accountability issues.

Future actions

- AL to develop and share a country and global level network maps to understand unlikely network connections;
- AL to look at developing a social network analysis process to understand the value and impact of our network-building efforts.

How do you ensure you reach out to those who are impacted/ concerned by your work?

AL prioritises learning by creating a space in which continuous feedback, skills development and curiosity around our work is infused into daily operations, decision-making and programming. We foster this intentionally through ongoing opportunities for staff to broaden their knowledge and skills through peer learning, structured training, reflection and sharing. We know this leads to improved risk-assessment and course-correction around our work, and more meaningful engagement with our program participants.

In order to gather information, we are strong proponents of real-time feedback and data collection- from across our Network Labs, partners and other stakeholders in our work in order to understand [how we are doing](#) and course correct as necessary. Adaptive learning is at the center of everything we do at the Accountability Lab and is a core part of how we measure our impact. We operationalize this learning in our work by using this real-time data to try new things and figure out what works and what does not. We then document learnings and make sure they inform our next round of experimentation.

We carry out small-scale learning reviews- meaningful internal studies to understand how and why our work may or may not be making a [difference](#). We also conduct annual learning surveys, all of which can be found [here](#). These surveys, which gather data from six key sets of stakeholders in our work- our teams, Boards of Directors, partners, participants in our programs, peer organizations and donors- allow us to understand the progress we are making towards the goals set out in this strategy, our adherence to our Theory of Action and how we may need to shift our efforts in the medium-term to achieve our vision.

We also carry out external evaluations and ongoing reviews of elements of our strategy. These reviews are tied closely to relationships we are building with the academic community that works on accountability and integrity issues and other partners such as the [Accountability Research Center](#). In these reviews we focus on concrete examples of how the change we seek is happening- or not- and what lessons this yields both for our own work and for the field more broadly. In terms of

communicating our impact and learning, we strive to follow impact reporting best practices: clarity, accessibility, transparency, accountability, verifiability, and proportionality. We produce accessible learning and impact survey reports annually; organize public events around learning and impact issues, including “Fail Faires” (events to celebrate and learn from failure); host monthly Open Board Calls; update social media daily with articles, photographs, success stories (blogs, videos and photos) and challenges we face; and we engage in broader conversations around these issues both locally in the countries we operate and globally through conferences and events.

Convening underpins our work. As such, we are thoughtful about the spaces where we work and how it serves a greater purpose within our mission. The Accountability Lab is currently managing co-working spaces in Monrovia, Bamako, Kathmandu and Abuja. Originally established in Washington, DC, the [Open Gov Hub](#) provides cost-efficient co-working facilities for civil society and international development organization, while cultivating collaboration and learning.

Future actions

- Teams value and buy into the need for centralized data management that increases our ability to iterate;
- Cultivate a culture of learning and build hard data collection and analytical skills across teams;
- Strengthen our body of knowledge to (1) improve internal practices, and (2) build the Lab’s reputation as a learning organization within the governance field; As a longer-term strategy, creating evidence gap maps will give the Lab a sense of where we are falling short in our own impact measurement, and the areas where evidence from our work could strengthen the existing body of knowledge;
- Effective communication of our learning work to inform the field.

How, specifically, do you maximize coordination with others operating in the same sectoral and geographic space, with special reference to national and local actors?

Over the past 8 years, we have worked to connect our efforts at the ground-level to larger reform processes at the local, national, regional and international levels. For example, we have worked with local government officials in Nepal to build accountability and provided guidance and advice to the African Union on issues of integrity and accountability. The goal of [AL Communities](#) is not to become a global level advocacy organization- there are many of those already- but to complement the work of these kinds of partners where it makes sense, drive coalitions for change at the local level and connect dots in ways that can lead to long-term change in communities. We see coordination through two separate but complementary activities.

Coalition Building- We actively work to participate in and build relevant coalitions and communities around accountability, transparency and open government at the local, national and international levels. This allows us to channel upwards the ideas we are surfacing from the bottom-up to inform and influence policies, practices and procedures, and ultimately shift power. We have both excellent networks in communities and access to rooms where policy decisions are made- and we want to make sure we use these together and effectively. These efforts include a particular focus on the [C20](#) as a way to channel civil society voices into high-level decision-making at the [G20](#), the [Open Government Partnership](#) as a process for the co-creation of goals related to accountability and open government; and work around [SDG16](#) with partners from across government, business and the media, including the [TAP Network](#).

Convening- efforts within communities to find innovative solutions to stubborn governance challenges, support citizen engagement and develop people-driven feedback loops, such as our Civic Action Teams. AL is not jealous – we know that we cannot do everything, nor should we, instead we work hard to bring together various actors, partners, communities - on everything from the

accountability of migration to the transparency of natural resource contracts- to better integrate the idea of citizen feedback into development more broadly and ensure people's voices are used to inform decision-making. Our convening, when it happens, is not big and flashy- there are already conferences and workshops at which we can meet with and learn from others. We work to convene the right people in catalytic, low-key ways at the local level around the accountability issues that matter to them, and to find opportunities for our Network Lab staff to feed their voices into relevant discussions. We will also work to create opportunities to convene in partnership with others including our accountpreneurs and organizations such as [Feedback Labs](#).

Teams across the globe are bringing together civil society organizations in their respective countries through the OGP. Some of the teams, such as AL South Africa, moved their office into spaces where they could work more collaboratively with other like-minded organizations. AL Liberia has formed and joined a series of groups over the years, such as OGP's network of civil society organizations, a group representing national CSOs and CBOs, and a UN peacebuilding group. AL Nepal has partnerships with 16 private colleges in Kathmandu. They have signed MoUs with these colleges to recruit volunteers and are also working to introduce accountability as a topic in their curriculum.

Future actions

- Going forwards, we would like to get more intentional around convening, pushing for reforms based on what we are learning and working to close the “implementation gap” between policy and practice:
- Hosting events such as Accountabili'tea' meetings to bring together unlikely networks.

How do you collect feedback from stakeholders? What evidence can you provide to demonstrate your organization is responsive to stakeholder feedback

We gather real-time feedback data from across our Network Labs, partners and other stakeholders in our work in order to understand how we are doing and course correct as necessary. Adaptive learning is at the center of everything we do at the Accountability Lab and is a core part of how we measure our impact. We operationalize this learning in our work by using this real-time data to try new things and figure out what works and what does not. We then document learnings and make sure they inform our next round of experimentation.

When we developed our 2020 – 2023 strategy, we opened up the document for [comment](#) from which we iterated, clarified and realigned. All teams hold regular meetings to generate feedback from stakeholders to improve programming and build relations. Other events and workshops are used as an opportunity to gather feedback. Feedback is also collected verbally or via feedback forms (Niger, Nepal). For instance, after the Integrity Summit, AL Nepal follows up with participants a few days later to ask what they thought of the program.

AL Nigeria collects feedback through forms at various meetings, Integrity Icon Summit and awards, Voice2Rep trainings, SDG challenges, Accountability Incubator trainings, and at the end of the projects. The MEL team analyzes the feedback and shares insights during meetings, where the team brainstorms on how to address any challenges or areas of concern. Last year, during the Voice2Rep campaign, a couple of artists were not satisfied with their participation and engagement. So, this year, the team addressed their feedback by bringing previous artists back as trainers and mentors for the latest edition of the project. Thus, the artists can clearly see how the Lab team has listened to their feedback and adapted the program based on their thoughts and suggestions.

Future actions

- Build hard data collection and analytical skills across teams so that by the end of 2020, 50% of staff indicate increased skills and ownership around learning procedures and questions

for gathering stakeholder feedback through surveys, interviews and feedback sessions. See AL Operations Plan

- AL produces an annual Learning Report as well as periodic blogs - following stakeholder/participant surveys, feedback sessions, debriefs, roundtables, and fail faires - on how the team used and will use stakeholder feedback to update programming

Provide evidence to show stakeholder engagement throughout the project cycle, including in decision making processes.

Before the Accountability Lab attempts to enter a new space, we undertake a comprehensive assessment to guide the decision as to whether we should ([ad](#))venture to a new space. The criteria can be divided in to the following categories:

Demand: There is explicit demand from young people, communities and governments to build accountability and fight corruption. The government participates in accountability initiatives and an organization like the Lab would be allowed to register with the stated mission of building accountability. The government shows some aspiration for transparent government and rule of law.

Strategy: This context would help us establish a presence in a geopolitically important region. There are changes happening in this context that provide an opportunity to shape evolving accountability dynamics and it could be a great testing ground for new ideas around accountability.

Knowledge: We know how decisions get made in this country and we have networks that can help us maximize the impact of everything we do. Specifically, Lab staff and/or Board members have contacts in the country or it is in a region where the Lab already operates.

Partnerships: There are partners in this context that can provide the support we need to scale-up and sustain our efforts over time. Vibrant and coordinated youth networks exist, there is an active civil society and a functioning and relatively free press. In addition, there may be governance frameworks or projects that can serve as “hooks” for our work.

Cost-effectiveness: We can have an impact in this context with small amounts of funding. The physical security of Lab staff and partners can be reasonably guaranteed. Electricity and Wifi is accessible. Where it is needed, we can achieve publicity through affordable paid or unpaid media.

Sustainability: The context appears to be fertile ground for building an ecosystem of people with integrity that is likely to endure. There is a nascent culture around socially-minded innovation; it has an engaged donor community; or the government seems like it’s interested in collaborating with the Lab. The Lab has identified an in-country representative with strong leadership and communication skills, a full understanding of the Lab’s work, and a commitment to carrying it out for at least a year.

Once these issues have been addressed in the affirmative through our more detailed context selection matrix, AL Staff, participants, stakeholders all participate at various levels through every step of the project cycle.

Conception – All programming is conceived in response to a challenge, issue or opportunity that arises while engaging with the communities where we work and is adapted as result of engagement with the communities in which we work – i.e. South Africa developed the [film fellowship](#) as a result of an overwhelming response to a programmatic need.

Design – Often, something that worked in another context in which we work is replicated elsewhere. This is not to say that it is transplanted wholesale, instead once conceptualized, the program design is heavily reliant on future/ or current program participants to finesse and ground the programming in the local context.

Implementation – While the values remain the same, AL programming is designed to be iterative and sufficiently flexible to adjust to changing priorities and needs. For this reason, we are heavily reliant on stakeholder feedback to ensure that programming remains relevant and necessary.

Learning – As noted above learning is a key component of our work.

AL Nigeria have demonstrated how they engage Integrity Icons with all of their programming. The team reaches out and consults with Icons to get their input in areas and sectors in which the Lab is considering programming, and on which the Icons are experts. The MEL team also seeks feedback from the Icons in order to find ways to improve their programs and engagement when working in the field.

Future actions

- Country teams to budget in time for program planning and stakeholder input in grant proposals;
- Better coordination among country teams with stakeholders at the conception and design phase;
- Timelines and plans developed for inputs from all stakeholders at various project stages.

What is some of the positive and negative feedback your organization has received from stakeholders? What have you done to take these into account? (Or, how have you incorporated them in future plans?)

As we went into 2019, AL commissioned an extensive perceptions study of our work, which revealed the following:

Positive¹

Learning – Donors, partners, beneficiaries, and Country Directors embrace the reflective learning mindset of the AL as well as emphasis on working at grassroots level – through individuals not institutions.

- Learning is a key aspect of the [2020 – 2023 Strategy](#). *Emphasis on creativity* - arts (rap music, murals); professional communications; impressive footprint -- disproportionate to staff size and budget

Values and value for money - Fresh/positive/innovative; unique approach in “naming and faming”; “creative” and “cool; Rare success in finding the “champions” within government capable of driving reform

Flexible/ Agile - Decentralized; decision-making and operations divested from main office; bottoms-up feel; Rare youth focus; using youth to engage other youth

Negative

We are ambitious and there were areas of our previous strategy where we didn’t manage everything we had hoped, or our assumptions were proven wrong.

Network Building - we thought that our work would naturally draw in diverse types of people and that we would easily be able to reach the most marginalized. That was wrong; we now know we have to be deeply intentional about [supporting inclusion](#), which is absolutely central to building accountability. The kind of language we use matters and the kind of listening we demonstrate affects who joins our efforts and who remains on the sidelines. Logistics and costs can be real constraints to inclusion in some places and we realized when we were able to overcome these that

our Labs did not always have the capacity to bring in the right people in meaningful ways so we [lost opportunities to create the change we hoped to bring about](#).

What we'll do now: building “unlikely networks” and being proximate to those we work with are core cross-cutting themes of our efforts, and going forwards we are going to ensure that these networks are as diverse as possible. This begins with ourselves so we have committed internally to building the systems and putting in place the policies to ensure inclusion, from fellows to senior management and from Network Labs to the Global team. We are also dedicating resources (both financial and staff time) as far as we can to making sure all of our work reflects this thinking too; and we have set clear targets for what we want to achieve across our programming.

Communications - In our previous strategy, we also could have done better at translating and communicating our work at the community level into larger changes at the national and international level. We managed to generate [excitement, engagement and new approaches](#) around accountability but these have not always changed, yet, into more systemic reforms. This relates to learning too as we didn't always collect the data we wanted or needed, or managed to explain why our work matters so much to the right people in the right ways. The day-to-day realities of management, systems-building, fundraising and delivery can at times prevent progress towards some of these larger goals.

What we'll do now: we are focusing heavily on building out our ability to create narratives around our work and grow our communications capacity. We also outline in our new strategy how we will focus our efforts to influence decision-making – locally, nationally and internationally – and how we are beginning to channel learning at the country level upwards to support larger system level reforms. We are also working with our partners at Open Society Foundations, Luminate, the MacArthur Foundation and others to improve our learning capacity and approaches across contexts, starting with a strategic learning retreat in Abuja.

Consistency - Internally, we made huge progress in building Accountability Labs in 8 different countries, but we also fell short on some of our previous operational goals. Our progress was also uneven across countries and at the global level we still did not find the right equilibrium in terms of support across functions and geographies with regard to our Network Labs. Building local Boards of Directors is still a work in progress; we need to improve our database management; our staff performance management indicators require ongoing revision; and in terms of fundraising, we sometimes struggled imperfectly with the goals and demands of some less-flexible donors.

What we'll do now - we are now the first multi-country organization as part of the [Accountable Now network](#) that will report individually on all of our Network Labs globally, rather than just at the headquarters level. This provides us with the framework for monitoring and improving a variety of issues related to governance, learning and delivery across all of our teams. In 2020 we are also bringing in some support around HR and through leadership coaching to help us improve decision-making and goal-setting. And in terms of fundraising, we are continuing both to diversify our support base and look carefully at ways both to build up our reserve funds in case of hard times and to generate more sustainable income from our activities.

These are just some highlights of the many areas where we did not achieve everything we set out to do in the past three years. But for us, the important thing is not that we didn't achieve our targets, but that we set ambitious goals and tried to learn from where we fell short. These lessons are deeply embedded in [our new strategy](#), and that's why we're excited about where it will take us over the next three years.

Teams have received mixed reactions from different stakeholders for their programming. Depending on the local context and the programs, there are both positive and negative feedback. For the team in Nigeria, there was an initial push back from the Voice2Rep artists. But once the team engaged

with the artists to explain the project's objective and goal, the artists had a better understanding of who was benefiting from their work and how. Today, the program is very successful.

While there is overall excitement for Integrity Icon, there are some skeptics about the campaign for example, some people in South Africa are skeptical as to whether five Icons a year can have an impact in a country with rampant corruption. Similarly, youth in Pakistan are interested in the Integrity Icon campaign, but they also show cynicism towards the idea that there are honest civil servants. In Nepal, some civil servants did not like the Icon project and tried to persuade the media to report negatively about the campaign. With support and advice from Integrity Icon jurists, board members and supporters of AL, we were able to push back against the negative coverage. In Mexico, the team has often faced questions about their limited engagement with the private sector. In some countries (Nepal and Mexico), NGOs/CSOs are viewed with mistrust and as foreign agents because of the support and funding they receive from foreign donors.

Future actions

- Use Accountable Now reporting process for annual reflection and course correction;
- Dedicate resources to learning and inclusion and consider an external evaluation at the end of 2020.

How do you ensure partners you work with, including individuals and organizations, retain the capacity they have gained beyond the project cycle?

As noted above, AL programs are designed to be self-reinforcing, sustainable and to continue long after the project end date. Each intervention is intended to develop key skills of program participants, vehicles to gain skills on how to start conversations and take action no matter the theme. Capacity is retained on three levels:

Knowledge – All of AL's programmes have a knowledge component to them, ensuring that not only are stakeholders and participants engaging in programming but also completing the project with a tangible skill, i.e. film fellows learning film making skills, CivActs enumerators and journalists with story-telling and interviewing skills etc. AL Nepal is harnessing the capacity of the Accountpreneurs through other projects. Some of the filmmakers from the incubator are running the Lab's film schools and making videos for the Integrity Icon campaigns for example. Similarly, a nominee for Integrity Icon Mexico was selected for the Accountability Incubator program. With AL's support, she is now applying for a project to be funded by the UK Government's Prosperity Fund.

Networks - Teams support individuals and organizations they work with by intentionally connecting them with one another, and connecting them with others outside of the immediate network. In South Africa, the team has formed an ecosystem with the Fellows to help build the group's capacity as aspiring filmmakers. Teams often share relevant information within their networks. Through the Lab network, they are able to forward and receive key readings, conference and event opportunities, as well as tools to stay informed about what is happening and to continue learning.

Values – A key aspect of what makes us different is the emphasis on accountability as a value which threads through all our work by demonstrating: integrity, practicality, humility, collaboration and innovation. We also believe that it is skill that can be learned and applied across an infinite number of issues as a result we aim to ensure that partners are able to take these capacities beyond the program cycle.

Future actions

- All alumni of AL programs are integrated into alumni groups and actively engaged across and between contexts virtually;
- Document and accredit skills outputs where possible and feed this learning into program design and development going forwards.

How do you identify and gather evidence regarding the root causes of the problems you address and use this to support your advocacy positions?

Most of the teams' work is informed by desk research on publicly available reports, articles, and policy documents; baseline and impact studies as well as surveys carried out by the teams; lessons learned from previous Lab projects; and consultation with partner organizations and citizens on an ongoing basis. The team in Pakistan conducts discussions with communities to gather evidence to inform programming. Others have worked with academics to deepen their understanding as well as do baseline research to track progress. Our ability to do this on a global scale has however been hampered by lack of financial resources.

Future actions

- Country teams to take advantage of opportunities to work with academia to deepen learning around our work;
- Continued engagement in learning processes that will allow us to understand drivers of a lack of accountability, including webinars, conferences, discussions and training courses.

How do you ensure the intended/targeted stakeholders support your advocacy work and value the resulting changes?

We believe that communities understand their own challenges and solutions better than external parties. In line with this, we start all advocacy-related projects by listening and with broad consultation. First, we identify key stakeholders in communities to consult while also building relationships and creating buy-in. Second, we listen to affected communities to ensure that we understand the relevant challenges, while avoiding elite capture by talking to individuals who are representative of all affected groups. Third, we always close feedback loops. We avoid extractive consultations or data collection by validating what we heard back in communities through sharing information accessible formats, which builds trust over time.

From the onset of a project, teams identify stakeholders who have similar goals and objectives that can help create synergies and ownership. Listening to stakeholders and keeping them informed has helped in building a wider base of support for the resulting change(s). As a result, more and more stakeholders are demonstrating support for AL programs, such as the Integrity Icon campaign. In Nepal, for example, government officials are personally getting in touch to submit nominations. Partners see AL as a convener and trust the Lab's expertise on accountability issues. Labs are invited to work on other national programs, such as the elections. Similarly, those who have benefitted from our programs - Icons, filmmakers, Accountpreneurs, artists - are advocating for AL's work. Additionally, an overwhelming number of partners in Mexico are expressing their interest in supporting events organized by the AL team.

On the other hand, the team in Pakistan has recognized that conversations with stakeholders have not always been reciprocal. A lot of times it is AL providing information to stakeholders, especially in communities. The team recognizes the need to have meaningful engagement for stakeholders to value the resulting changes from AL programming.

Future actions

- Ongoing support for stakeholder engagement and relationship building, which teams can localize;
- Continued efforts to understand stakeholder perceptions of and value in our work- with that learning used to inform future planning and programming.

Are annual budgets, policies, evaluations, executive remuneration and vital statistics about the organization easily available? Provide links and highlight membership in initiatives such as IATI.

AL attempts, as far as possible, to be radically accountable - at the global level all our reports, annual budgets and audits are put online for anyone to read. While we have not quite managed to do this with all the network labs, we fully intend to do so. We make every effort to protect marginalised program participants and those engaging on more sensitive accountability issues. Should somebody need this information however, it can be made available upon request. Some network labs such as AL Pakistan do not share all information publicly for safety reasons. We also seek to leverage online data collection efforts where we can. For example, AL Nigeria's Voice2Rep campaign data is reported through the [International Aid Transparency Initiative platform](#) as is AL Mali's Integrity Icon campaign. AL provides global information in other platforms such as [Guidestar](#) where 990's, which include key donor, remuneration and income data can be found and downloaded for free.

Future actions

- Include all budgets and annual audits of various network labs on AL website using an interactive format so the data can be disaggregated and understood easily;
- Continued efforts to cross-post data on additional platforms online to ensure complete transparency.

What policies do you have in place to ensure a fair pay scale? Do you measure the gender pay gap in your organization, and if so, what is it? What are the salaries of the five most senior positions in the organization and what is the ratio between the top and bottom salaries?

AL has [committed](#) to prioritise gender equality throughout our programming and staffing. We are working to ensure gender parity and equity in our workplace culture and policies. We understand that simply having a gender balance doesn't automatically lead to equity, and that we need to transform our culture to one that values individuals equally. We now have equivalent parental leave for all, and we have a comprehensive new sexual harassment policy. We have also incorporated more rigorous background checks for all of our hiring processes; and we are co-developing trainings and learning opportunities for all staff- new and existing- with regular check-ins on these issues as part of performance reviews. Beyond these policies, we are striving above all to create a transparent culture within the Accountability Lab- and to the extent possible- within our sphere of influence, where women and men are valued equally, treated respectfully, where harassment and discrimination are not tolerated, and where staff members feel safe enough to voice their opinions on any subject.

AL has a staff job titles and descriptions policy which [describes staff levels](#). While we have not specifically measured the ratios we attempt to – as far as possible, and within the resources available- provide fair, competitive remuneration to staff, no matter the gender or pay level. Teams rely on HR and finance policies to determine pay. Pay in most locations is based on experience, education level, the level of responsibility, and years of service. In AL South Africa, the ratio between top and bottom salaries is 1:4.5.

In Nepal, there is a pay gap which is largely due to the fact that some of the staff initially joined as volunteers without much experience. They have had discussions with staff on ways to decrease this gap and review pay scales. There have been issues in Nepal with some volunteers receiving stipends while others did not.

Future actions

- Country teams to measure top-bottom pay ratio and gender pay gap and share this with AL Global on an annual basis;
- Country teams to localize fair payscale processes and share these with all staff.

How do you ensure privacy rights and protect personal data?

Recognizing that our staff gather sensitive information from individuals who may be in positions of vulnerability, AL is committed to ensuring secure storage of all information gathered. When collecting data from vulnerable populations, staff members are required to adhere to AL's Safeguarding Policy, which guides all interactions with at-risk individuals. Additionally, AL avoids extractive data collection practices by only gathering information that is relevant and helps us measure the progress and success of our programs. All staff members or implementing partners are required to adhere to these commitments.

Where data is collected by program participants themselves, community members are trained to assist AL in gathering community feedback. While this methodology presents some risks, we are confident in our ability to select participants who are likely to be accurate, trustworthy data collectors, and to provide the necessary training to ensure that they have the required skills. AL has used this particular methodology across 4 countries in a variety of languages and working on diverse thematic areas, and this has taught us that community members provide more authentic feedback on governance challenges than local enumerators. Risks associated with a data breach as a result of community member data collection is mitigated by using [Kobo Toolbox](#), which allows enumerators to collect data on mobile devices while storing the data on a central server which is password protected and only accessible to authorized AL staff.

All data is stored and managed according to rigorous internal protocols aimed at ensuring the integrity, comparability, and security of information and data sources, including the use of encryption for partners working on sensitive projects. We work with partners to develop simple and secure data security protocols for project data to ensure that personal and politically sensitive data is protected.

On a country level, staff data is only accessible by the HR team and the Country Director. Hard copies of staff files and personal information are securely under lock and key, while soft versions are mostly on computers or - rarely - backup drives.

AL Mexico has been informing contacts that their information will not be used for spamming, lending, or listings for other organizations.

In Nigeria, policies related to privacy rights and personal data are included in the code of conduct. The policy outlines how data needs to be handled, emphasizing confidentiality. Any outside organization requesting data from the team needs to go through an approval process which is signed off by the MEL team, which manages all of the data the team creates.

Future actions

- Country teams to regularly assess data privacy policies in line with both global and national standards;
- AL Global and Network Labs to work on digital well-being and safety and security through a new Duty of Care program in 2020.

Who are the five largest single donors and what is the monetary value of their contributions? Where private individual donors cannot be named due to requested anonymity, please explain what safeguards are in place to ensure that anonymous contributions do not have an unfair influence on organizational activities.

None of the Labs have anonymous donors. AL Global often gives small grants to country teams to pilot new programs and fill funding gaps. AL Mexico currently has no funders.

South Africa (some funding is pending due to the need for a performance and financial audit):

- Luminate - 200,000 USD
- Indigo Trust - 20,000 USD
- Open Society Foundation - 20,000 USD
- Danish Embassy in SA - 35,000 USD

Pakistan:

- Open Society Foundation - 80,000 USD
- DAI - 80,000-95,000 USD
- UNDP - 40-50,000 USD via multiple small grants
- CIPE - 20,000 USD
- Asia Foundation - 35,000 USD

Liberia:

- USAID LAVI - 150,000 USD
- Canadian Fund - 20,000 USD
- World Bank - 50,000 USD
- Global Giving - 5,000 USD
- Orange - 7,500 USD

Nepal:

- UK Embassy in Nepal - 50,000 USD
- UNDP - 15,000 USD
- Open Road Alliance - 63,000 USD
- Humanity United - 200,000 USD
- CIPE - 80,000 USD

Nigeria:

- Luminate - 50,000 USD for current FY
- MacArthur Foundation - 350,000 USD for two FYs
- Dutch Embassy in Nigeria- 250,000 EUR
- Ford Foundation - 80,000 USD
- National Endowment for Democracy - 45,000 USD

Provide evidence that recruitment and employment is fair and transparent.

Hiring processes differ among teams, although we are moving globally to standardized processes that are open and transparent. While some teams (Nigeria, Liberia, South Africa) adopt an open, competitive process, there are some cases (Nepal, Pakistan) where recruitment is done internally or through head hunting (mostly for short term positions). Where teams have adopted an open process, every position is advertised through social media, local NGO platforms, job sites, and newsletters. Applications are then reviewed by a hiring committee.

AL Liberia has a rigorous recruitment process. The team develops a ToR for any open position which is circulated within their network as well as the popular Executive Mansion website. After 2 weeks of advertisement, a committee reviews all the CVs based on the experience, education and skill requirements, which are stated in the ToR. The team interview shortlisted candidates, and the selection is made based on the scores given by the interview panel. The score sheets are filed for future reference.

AL Nepal takes a different approach. All staff start as volunteers and are hired internally after an interview by a committee. They have developed a general template to call for applications for the Lab - not necessarily a specific position, but it allows them to get applications from potential candidates outside of the organization

What are you doing to invest in staff development? What indicators demonstrate your progress? What are your plans to improve?

We know that people are our most important resource and that we must invest in our staff to support them to learn and improve, and for the Lab to achieve its goals. We provide every opportunity we can for this process to take place- and these tend to fall into three key buckets. First access to networks and opportunities such as conferences and events. We want to make sure our Country Directors and other staff are out-in-front talking about the good work they are doing and building relationships. AL prioritises opportunities for staff to speak domestically and travel around the world to conferences and trainings- such as the OGP Summits, Transparency International Summer Schools and African Union Meetings for example; and to integrate into networks run by organizations such as the Obama Foundation, Ashoka and the World Economic Forum. We place a particular emphasis on promoting and supporting participation of female staff wherever we can.

We encourage staff to pursue knowledge through additional study and training. We dedicate a portion of our budget to support them to do this - for example, several staff are studying part time while working, and we cover some costs where we can. We also support further full-time study if that is the goal of staff members. While we do not want to lose good people, we understand that if they come back to us from studying or work for another organization that strengthens our organization in the long-run. In Pakistan, each staff member, except the Country Director, is allocated a learning budget of 30,000 Pakistani rupees (\$180) for training workshops and online courses each year. AL Pakistan also prioritizes sending female staff members to networking and learning events.

We recognize that our Country Directors need to develop key skills and knowledge. At the same time we realise that staff have different skills and interests- and we are not expecting them to do everything. Through AL Global we are building out our ability to support the Country Directors to learn from each other and our capacity (in line with the division of labour outlined above) to ensure our country teams are effective at what they set out to do.

AL Liberia supervisors and supervisees work to develop key performance indicators, which includes responsibilities as well as areas of personal development. They are reviewed regularly to track progress. They have previously allocated about 2,500 dollars to support staff development beyond provided house training. Staff members are also encouraged to join night school or online courses.

AL Niger has taken an employee-first approach and is focused on putting the right people in the right spaces with the required capacity. They have prioritized an integrated approach to career development and employee engagement. The Lab also provides staff with the opportunity to go on study trips and to try English language courses. The Niger team is also constantly familiarizing all staff members with the entire range of the Lab's policies and initiatives to ensure comprehensive understanding of the Lab's work, priorities, and various teams (ie. MEL, comms, programs, admin/HR, etc.).

Going forwards we want to begin to develop inter-Lab exchanges and a buddy program, through which country leadership can visit each other and learn from the ways they are each growing the Lab locally. This will begin regionally in Africa between South Africa and Nigeria; and has already taken place in South Asia between Nepal and Pakistan, and which has yielded lessons we can use. We see leadership as a collective process and we want to avoid key-person dependency. Therefore, we are also working hard in the ways above not just with the people leading our country programs, but with others in functional roles and with junior staff too- to make sure the next generation of leaders is always rising through the organization. This also relates to our Non-Profit Fellowship Program, which we see as a key way to develop the experience and skills of the next generation of leaders both within the Lab and beyond.

Future actions

- Country teams to add key performance indicators for personal development to every staff member's KPIs;
- Country teams to budget in staff development funds in their proposals, where possible and feasible.

How does your organization ensure a safe working environment for everybody, including one free of sexual harassment, abuse, exploitation or any other unacceptable conduct? What indicators demonstrate your progress? What are your plans to improve?

All teams are committed to providing a safe working environment free of sexual harassment, abuse and exploitation and adhere to globally agreed upon policies on harassment and grievance processes. Some teams (Nigeria, Liberia, South Africa) have outlined policies in their code of conduct and staff members are required to sign them upon joining the team. However, teams are at different levels when it comes to communicating policies and setting up mechanisms for handling complaints. Most teams are working to align AL Global HR policies and code of conduct in line with local laws while also communicating these policies with staff through workshops.

AL Pakistan, Liberia and Mexico have clearly defined policies which are communicated to staff. There are specific mechanisms to report any kind of abuse. In Pakistan's case, there is a two member women's committee on anti-harassment led by HR staff. In Liberia, they are encouraging a culture of reporting, where staff members can report any concerns to their supervisor or the Country Director. They also conduct reviews and training for staff members on gender policies. These policies are applicable to all those working with AL, not just the core staff. In the future, the Lab will have a dedicated, independent whistleblowing/ complaints mechanism.

Future actions

- Country teams to adapt HR policies to be in line with national laws, prioritizing whichever is more rigorous;
- Country teams to conduct annual trainings on HR policies for all staff;

Resources are handled effectively

How do you acquire resources in line with your values and globally accepted standards and without compromising your independence?

Teams apply caution when choosing who to work with and how, especially when it comes to acquiring resources, in order to ensure their values and independence are not compromised. They value social capital over financial, and assessing reputational risk is key. For example, AL Mexico checks whether acquiring the resource will damage their authority, reputation and/or values and vision through an organized vetting process. Teams in Liberia, Nepal and South Africa are reluctant to take resources from some private sector actors given the poor image these actors have because of their perceived and/or actual corruption. They also do not take resources from politicians nor the government for similar reasons. In some cases, teams negotiate with donors to align priorities and find areas of common interest. At times when priorities do not match, teams have had to forgo funding. After the 2015 earthquake, AL Nepal did not renew their contract with UNICEF because their priorities, values, and approach were not complementary to AL's work.

Teams have stated that there is a need for a global process or policy which sets clear guidance on acquiring resources. AL Niger develops concept notes in line with their values as well as emphasizing the sources of funding and specifying the partners' objectives during calls for projects. Additionally, the decision to acquire funding is based on impartiality and non-interference by donors in internal management.

Future actions

- Develop network guidance on accepting resources that will be signed-off on and shared with all Network Labs and posted publicly on our website;
- Continued conversations with existing donors and peers about how to ensure the right balance between sustainability and values in terms of resource mobilization.

How do you monitor progress against strategic objectives? Have you re-allocated resources to optimize impact?

AL measures progress against strategic objectives through regular analysis of our strategy and its relationship with the outcomes we are contributing to on the ground. The strategy is matched with a key set of indicators that we are measuring in various ways, as outlined in the questions related to learning above. We work to re-allocate resources according to areas of progress and where we see that those resources will generate greatest positive change over time.

AL has also developed a three year operations plan which denotes where and how we are prioritising our work for the coming years. The plan is divided into communications, learning, and growth – each of which have a set of targets and measurements for success. These indicators are reassessed on a quarterly basis as part of the KPI's of the senior staff who are accountable for their success. We work hard to ensure that each project that we undertake will directly speak to the Lab's strategic objectives, but this is not always possible due to the restrictive nature of donor funding. As we grow, however, and the more we are able to leverage our network status and collective learning we are better able to justify the need for further resources to support the realisation of our strategic objectives, above and beyond just achieving programmatic outputs.

Future actions

- The Lab will conduct formal annual strategic reviews to assess progress against strategic objectives;

- The Lab will better articulate strategic objectives to the broader donor and stakeholder community.

How do you minimize the risk of corruption, bribery or misuse of funds? Which financial controls do you have in place? What do you do when controls fail? Describe a relevant situation that occurred in this reporting period?

Teams have different procedures in place to minimize risk of corruption, bribery or misuse of funds. They reconcile expenses on a monthly basis and do an audit annually. They have adopted measures to minimize risks by (i) limiting use of petty cash; (ii) creating financial accounts for individual donors/projects; (iii) limiting advance payments; (iv) holding respective staff members accountable for any unaccounted expenses; (v) going through a bidding process to select service providers; (vi) adopting strict financial approval processes based on the value of the transaction; and (vii) discouraging staff members from taking gifts and/or favors.

In 2019 we did not experience any significant issues of corruption within the organization. AL Nigeria were provided forged travel receipts by a participant for an event. They found out only after the participant had been reimbursed for the expense, and they did not have a policy in place to guide them on how to handle such a situation. In response, they started booking travel themselves. In cases where this was not possible, they set a cap on the amount that participants could claim. They now also have multiple levels of review to verify expenses depending on the value. They also discourage staff carrying a lot of cash for travel/field work and, where possible, the office pays service providers directly.

In Niger, the team complies with its procurement and finance rules and procedures by empowering each team member with oversight and verification responsibilities according to their degree of responsibility. Monthly expenditures as well as any contract exceeding 100,000 CFA must be verified by the AL Mali finance manager who is responsible for Niger's finances. When designing budgets for projects, the team is precise and realistic to avoid over-budgeting as much as possible in order to limit excess funds.

Future actions

- Country teams to switch auditors every three years to ensure the objectivity of that process over time;
- Instigate a process with the Lab's Financial Manager to better streamline incident management processes across Network Labs.

What is your governance structure and what policies/practices guide replacing and recruiting new trustees/board members

AL places a particular emphasis on internal accountability. For this reason each Lab, whether or not it is legally mandated, has a Board of Directors (or local equivalent). New AL Global board members are identified through a board skills matrix; and members are recruited in part based on those skills gaps. While all potential board members are judged equally, AL's diversity policy does override qualification. This policy places a bias on gender, racial, and geographic diversity. Preferred candidates are asked to provide a comprehensive CV and motivation letter. Potential board members are also interviewed by the ED, the chair of the governance committee as well as the Board Chair. All appointments must be unanimous. AL Global board members serve a 2 year term, renewable twice.

Some teams such as those in Nepal, Liberia, Nigeria have struggled to ensure consistent board engagement. Nepal and Nigeria have set up an advisory board which allows for advice and support without legal and time-intensive responsibilities. Newer teams like AL South Africa and AL Mexico

are still working on forming a complete board. Teams have adopted the AL Global policies for recruiting and replacing new trustees/board members. Selected board members are generally people who are familiar with AL's work and bring the skills and networks to further the organization's objectives.

Future actions

- Support teams to ensure consistent board recruitment and engagement;
- Put in place board evaluation processes across all Network Lab boards.

How does your board oversee the adherence to policies, resources allocation, potential risks and processes for complaints and grievances?

The level of oversight from the Board of Directors varies in terms of adherence to policies, resource allocation, potential risk and processes for complaints and grievances. The AL Global board has been very involved with the development, verification and alignment of AL policies. Network Labs' boards have mostly been involved in looking at program interventions, financial sustainability, and learning. Consistency remains a challenge, as board members are often busy. Network labs continue to look at creative ways to engage the Board or replace less active members with new members who are qualified, interested and available.

Future actions

- Country teams to ensure quarterly board meetings occur that meet quorum standards;
- Country teams to each create a board governance committee that oversees adherence to organizational policies and national laws;
- Country teams to each create a board finance committee that oversees the organization's resource allocation and management.

What processes and mechanisms does your lab have in place to handle external complaints, including those relating to unacceptable conduct? Please provide an overview of the number and nature of complaints in the reporting period, their validity and how they were handled

While AL does not have an independent whistleblowing mechanism, the policy (which is freely available on the website) does direct all complaints to the AL Global Executive Director who is mandated to take all complaints seriously and investigate accordingly. In the last year we have had two complaints (one in Liberia and one in Nigeria) against staff members. In each case, the Executive Director investigated the claims, and where possible spoke to the complainant (one was anonymous). In both cases the relevant Country Director was informed as well as the AL Global Board of Directors. One case related to a potential new staff member who had an allegation of corruption against him. This was thoroughly investigated and was found to be untrue by at least three independent, unrelated individuals who had intimate knowledge of the issue. The other case related to a disgruntled former employee who did not follow-up on the complaint.

On a network level, AL Nepal does have a program committee to address complaints, and they consult their Board when necessary on these issues.

Future actions

- Support the development of country level grievance committees;
- Ensure a whistleblowing function on the AL website.

How are internal complaints handled? Please provide an overview of the number and nature of complaints in the reporting period. How many of those were valid, and of those that were valid, how were they handled?

AL has a global grievance policy which provides for staff members to report to either their direct superiors, senior management or a member of the AL Global team. AL Network Labs are not large and as a result this formal mechanism has not been used often as complaints are usually dealt with informally.

Future actions

- Country teams to publicise policy guidelines among all team members and ensure that they are comfortable using them;
- Global team to create a junior staff council to act as a funnel for internal complaints, recommendations, and ideas for management.

How do you make decisions about the need for confidentiality and protecting the anonymity of those involved?

To date, AL has not had the resources to put in place an anonymised complaints/ whistleblowing mechanism. Where a complaint has reached the Executive Director/ senior staff, the complaints policy does mandate discretion and assurance of anonymity if requested. Reprisals are not tolerated in any form at the Lab.

Future actions

- Develop anonymised complaints/ whistleblowing mechanism;
- Communicate regularly with Network Lab staff about the existence of the mechanism and how it can be used.

Leadership is dedicated to fulfilling the 12 commitments

How is the governing body and management held accountable for fulfilling their strategic promises, including on accountability?

AL made a collective decision to subscribe to Accountable Now and the 12 Commitments. This decision was taken at the annual global retreat in May in Doha in 2019. Similarly a commitment was made by the AL Global of Directors prior to this during the April 2019 Board of Directors meeting. The process for undertaking this report includes: 2 hour recorded meeting between the Country Director of a specific Network Lab, a member of the local Board of Directors for that Lab, and a member of the Global Board of Directors. This recording is then turned into a transcript which forms the local country teams report (for internal use). The transcripts are then amalgamated into a single report (this document) which is validated by senior staff, the AL Governance Committee and then signed off by the AL Global board of Directors before it is sent to Accountable Now. A list of recommendations will be developed along with the report for the board and senior staff to incorporate into the operational plan.

Beyond Accountable Now, AL has a board self-assessment that is undertaken on an annual basis from which the board develops priorities for the coming year. While this process is not yet universally adopted across the Lab, we are working on this for the future.

Future actions

- Accountable Now reporting across all Accountability Labs on an annual basis;

- AL Global board assessment, to be mandated for use across all Network Lab Boards of Directors.

What steps have you taken to ensure staff are included in discussing progress toward commitments to organizational accountability?

AL made a collective decision to subscribe to Accountable Now and the 12 Commitments as outlined above. Beyond Accountable Now, all Country Directors sign a collaboration agreement which is revised on an annual basis (for the first three years) and then every two years going forward. Their Labs' commitments to accountability are highlighted in that document along with their participation in the Accountable Now process, as a means of measuring their accountability.

What is your accountability reports scope of coverage? What authority or influence do you have over national entities and how, specifically, are you using it to ensure compliance with the accountability commitments and to drive the overall accountability agenda?

As noted above, AL's Accountable Now report covers the entire organisation, although we hand in one report for the organisation as a singular entity. The Accountable Now reporting process is written into the AL Collaboration Agreement with Network Labs.

Annual Country Team Accountable Now Reporting 2019

WHAT WE HAVE ACHIEVED	
Our Impact 3	<p>A1. What is your mission statement and theory of action?</p> <hr/> <p>A2. What are your key strategic indicators for success and what is the involvement of stakeholders in developing these indicators?</p> <hr/> <p>A3. What were the progress and difficulties encountered against these indicators over the reporting period?</p> <hr/> <p>A4. What were the significant events or changes in the organization/sector over the reporting period of relevance to governance and accountability?</p> <hr/>
Sustainability 2	<p>B1. What have you done to ensure sustainability of work beyond the project cycle? What evidence do you have of success in this respect?</p> <hr/> <p>B2. What lessons have been learned in this period? How have the lessons been transparently shared among internal and external stakeholders? How do you plan to use these lessons to improve your work in future?</p> <hr/>
Leading by Example 4	<p>C1. How do you demonstrate excellence around strategic priorities?</p> <hr/> <p>C2. What evidence is there that your expertise is recognized and welcomed by your peers, partners and other stakeholders?</p> <hr/> <p>C3. How does your Lab practice being inclusive and protecting human rights, including promoting women's rights and gender equality?</p> <hr/> <p>C4. How do you minimise the Lab's negative impacts on your stakeholders, especially partners and the people you work for? How does your organization protect those most susceptible to harassment, abuse, exploitation, or any other type of unacceptable conduct?</p> <hr/> <p>C5. How do you demonstrate responsible stewardship for the environment?</p> <hr/>

OUR APPROACH TO CHANGE	
Key Stakeholders 3	<p>D1. List key stakeholders- what process do you use to identify them?</p> <hr/> <p>D2. How do you ensure you reach out to those who are impacted/ concerned by your work?</p> <hr/> <p>D3. How, specifically, do you maximize coordination with others operating in the same sectoral and geographic space, with special reference to national and local actors?</p> <hr/>
Engaging Stakeholders 3	<p>E1. How do you collect feedback from stakeholders? What evidence can you provide to demonstrate your organization is responsive to stakeholder feedback?</p> <hr/>

	E2. Provide evidence to show stakeholder engagement throughout the project cycle, including in decision making processes.
	E3. What is some of the positive and negative feedback your organization has received from stakeholders? What have you done to take these into account? (Or, how have you incorporated them in future plans?)
	E4. How do you ensure partners you work with, including individuals and organizations, retain the capacity they have gained beyond the project cycle?
Advocacy work addresses root causes 3	F1. How do you identify and gather evidence regarding the root causes of the problems you address and use this to support your advocacy positions? F2. How do you ensure the intended/targeted stakeholders support your advocacy work and value the resulting changes?
Transparent, invite dialogue and protect stakeholders 3	G1. Are annual budgets, policies, evaluations, executive remuneration and vital statistics about the organization easily available? Provide links and highlight membership in initiatives such as IATI. G2. What policies do you have in place to ensure a fair pay scale? Do you measure the gender pay gap in your organization, and if so, what is it? What are the salaries of the five most senior positions in the organization and what is the ratio between the top and bottom salaries? G3. How do you ensure privacy rights and protect personal data? G4. Who are the five largest single donors and what is the monetary value of their contributions? Where private individual donors cannot be named due to requested anonymity, please explain what safeguards are in place to ensure that anonymous contributions do not have an unfair influence on organizational activities.

WHAT WE DO INTERNALLY

Staff and volunteers are enabled to do their best 4	H1. Provide evidence that recruitment and employment is fair and transparent. H2. What are you doing to invest in staff development? What indicators demonstrate your progress? What are your plans to improve? H3. How does your organization ensure a safe working environment for everybody, including one free of sexual harassment, abuse, exploitation or any other unacceptable conduct? What indicators demonstrate your progress? What are your plans to improve?
Resources are handled effectively	I1. How do you acquire resources in line with your values and globally accepted standards and without compromising your independence?

<p style="text-align: center;">4</p>	<p>I2. How do you monitor progress against strategic objectives? Have you re-allocated resources to optimize impact?</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">3</p> <p>Governance processes maximize accountability</p>	<p>I3. How do you minimize the risk of corruption, bribery or misuse of funds? Which financial controls do you have in place? What do you do when controls fail? Describe a relevant situation that occurred in this reporting period?</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">4</p> <p>Leadership is dedicated to fulfilling the 12 commitments\</p>	<p>J1. What is your governance structure and what policies/practices guide replacing and recruiting new trustees/board members?</p>
	<p>J2. How does your board oversee the adherence to policies, resources allocation, potential risks and processes for complaints and grievances?</p>
	<p>J3. What processes and mechanisms does your lab have in place to handle external complaints, including those relating to unacceptable conduct? Please provide an overview of the number and nature of complaints in the reporting period, their validity and how they were handled?</p>
	<p>J4. How are internal complaints handled? Please provide an overview of the number and nature of complaints in the reporting period. How many of those were valid, and of those that were valid, how were they handled?</p>
	<p>J5. How do you make decisions about the need for confidentiality and protecting the anonymity of those involved?</p>
	<p>K1. How is the governing body and management held accountable for fulfilling their strategic promises, including on accountability?</p>
	<p>K2. What steps have you taken to ensure staff are included in discussing progress toward commitments to organizational accountability?</p>
	<p>K3. What is your accountability reports scope of coverage? What authority or influence do you have over national entities and how, specifically are you using it to ensure compliance with the accountability commitments and to drive the overall accountability agenda?</p>