



**2021 ANNUAL COUNTRY TEAM
ACCOUNTABLE NOW REPORTING**



OPENING STATEMENT

[Accountability Lab](#) (AL) was founded in 2012 as an effort 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.

AL is structured as a [translocal network](#) that provides a way to break down big ideas- like accountability- into more manageable pieces; and understand how local efforts to problem solve are both essential and instructive. It allows us to see how what appear to be smaller fixes can actually connect together to change the social fabric and build the trust we need over time.

For us, being a translocal network also means distributed, equitable leadership. We are working to ensure that the Accountability Lab is led through a progressive, collaborative and shared network of leaders across the countries in which we work, all of whom support decision-making both locally and globally.

In 2021, the AL network included [Nepal](#) and [Liberia](#) (2012), [Pakistan](#) (2015), [Mali](#) and [Nigeria](#) (2017), [Niger](#) and [South Africa](#) (2018), [Mexico](#) (2019), [Zimbabwe](#) (2020), [DRC](#), and [Somaliland](#) (2021).

We also ran Integrity Icon with partners in [Sri Lanka](#), and [the United States](#), and led civil service capacity building programs and Accountability Incubators in Guinea Bissau, Kenya and Uganda. Our network of local Labs work together to achieve the Lab’s mission to make governance work for people by supporting active citizens, responsible leaders and accountable institutions.

In 2020, COVID-19 fundamentally changed accountability dynamics everywhere, including global politics, economics, and the way societies operate. To accommodate for a rapidly changing civil society infrastructure, we moved quickly to build on existing ideas, approaches, networks, and assets to evolve our work.

These changes included a focus on the wellbeing of our teams; citizen feedback on pandemic responses through our Civic Action Teams; creative, bottom-up approaches through our Accountability Incubator; adaptive learning inside and outside of our organization; working within systems with our Integrity Icons to push for reforms; and through multilateral approaches as Chair of the [C20 Anti-Corruption Working Group](#). Our goal was to ensure decision-making focused on the most vulnerable; inclusion and diversity in our programming and operations; and to further build our structure as a translocal network.

In 2021, we continued these efforts as the pandemic endured. The wellbeing of our teams remained paramount - we launched a new monthly internal wellness newsletter and increased our internal emergency fund.

Our work to support citizen feedback as part of the pandemic response and to counter misinformation grew rapidly, reaching 286,472 people through 308 bulletins in 10 languages. This effort has led to partnerships for scale-up, including with provincial governments in Pakistan and Nepal.

Our Accountability Incubator grew dramatically through virtual iterations in new and existing countries. We supported our Integrity Icons through large-scale virtual campaigns, ceremonies, and networking events. Our Accountability Music Awards and Gov-HER-nance programs also grew. We launched new projects around public budgets in Mexico, art in Nigeria, local elections and governance in South Africa, anti-corruption networks in Niger, and peace-building in Mali and Pakistan.

Despite the challenges, we have met many of the goals we set out to achieve in 2021. We now work in 12 countries and partner with another three, and in 2021, our budget was \$3.46 million. We work with an amazing team of more than 100 people globally, and have made significant progress toward our strategic and operational goals.

WHY WE EXIST AND THE GLOBAL CONTEXT

The Accountability Lab was created in response to the desire of young people around the world to push for greater accountability in their countries and communities. Over the past nine years, we've cultivated a deliberate emphasis on positive deviance. Our work falls into three categories: [AL Knowledge](#), [AL Campaigns](#), and [AL Communities](#).

At the outset, the Lab worked with young innovators to create solutions to accountability issues in their communities - a program which has now evolved into the Accountability Incubator and falls under AL Knowledge. Through AL Campaigns like [Integrity Icon](#), we work directly with reformers within government. We've grown our programming to include coalition building - connecting the dots between changemakers and government, and facilitating collective action, falling under the core area of [AL Communities](#). We've also embedded [adaptive learning](#) into all of our programming, 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.

AL has become an organization that serves as a connector and facilitator. We are uniquely able to connect dots at all levels - from communities on the ground to ministries and government officials. This allows us to identify how and why change might take place, and inform local, national, and international efforts to generate positive change.

By developing unlikely networks and meaningfully bringing together diverse sets of stakeholders to collectively push for change, we're connecting those who would not traditionally interact in order to open new avenues for action. We understand that we are well placed to support communities to develop the knowledge and tools they need to be successful in creating accountability and good governance. We pride ourselves on our creativity and flexibility - remaining nimble, even while growing - to adapt quickly and take advantage of opportunities to bolster accountability.

We are finding that through our work, communities are more engaged in local decision making; innovation is driving the kinds of change needed; and there are many people with integrity who are working to improve systems. We intend to highlight, support and grow connections between these people and ideas- to consolidate positive change and push back against what can sometimes feel like overwhelming challenges. We are working to change decision-making in ways that produce a more fair and equitable distribution of resources. We are in a position in which our programs can generate learning for others; our networks can become the spaces in which young people learn about these issues; and our ways of working set new standards for other organizations.

WHAT WE HAVE ACHIEVED

MISSION

[Accountability Lab](#) makes governance work for people everywhere by supporting active citizens, responsible leaders and accountable institutions. We are reimagining how to build accountability to support a world in which resources are used wisely, decisions benefit everyone fairly, and people lead secure lives

THEORY OF ACTION

The current AL theory of action was developed in 2019 as part of the 2020 – 2023 strategy. As a general approach, we find it important to pause and reflect on our mission, vision, and programs often, and recalibrate where necessary. We view a theory of action not only as a way to map inputs, outputs, and outcomes, but also as a way to understand the causality between them. Our theory of action is not an agreed on, defined diagram – it is a living document to be amended and refined over using data from our programming teams on the ground.

FUTURE ACTIONS

- Re-evaluate our current Theory of Action as part of the 2023-2026 Strategy;
- Continue supporting Network Labs to integrate the Theory of Action into their work and using it 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?

In 2021, Accountability Lab remained focused on our three core areas of work:

1. Shifting norms and behaviors (Campaigns) - around issues of accountability to ensure that integrity becomes the expected behavior within societies (campaigns). Examples from our work include [Integrity Icon](#) and [Voice2Rep](#);
2. Equipping reformers for collective action (Knowledge) - inside and outside government- with the knowledge and tools they need to push for better governance through training and learning (knowledge). Examples from our work include the [Accountability Incubator](#) and the [Integrity Innovation Labs](#);
3. Influencing policies, processes and practices (Communities)- around critical accountability issues, through growing coalitions and advocating for change (communities). Examples from our work include the [Civic Action Teams](#) (CivActs), our [Arts for Change](#) efforts and our advocacy through fora including the [G20](#).

The following key indicators for success are used to measure the efficacy of our work against the three core areas outlined:

- 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;
- Changes in policies, practices and regulations in spaces where reformers who participate in our programs work and advocate;
- The extent to which networks of people collaborate and push for change collectively;
- The diversity of stakeholders we partner with; and
- The overall reach of our programs.

Across our Network Labs, our teams include learning officers and managers that lead the development of key indicators for programming, however, our indicators are open to contributions from all staff members. During the program design process, we take input from external partners and stakeholders in the development of key indicators. At AL Global, the learning team is led by the Global Director of Learning. In 2021, we added two program and learning managers who give support to country and program teams in the development of key indicators.

FUTURE ACTIONS

- Initiate small-scale learning reviews with key stakeholders;
- Continue surveys of training participants and community members;
- Synthesize learning across countries.

WHAT ARE THE PROGRAMMATIC AND OPERATIONAL LEVEL PROGRESS AND DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED AGAINST THESE INDICATORS OVER THE REPORTING PERIOD?

SHIFTING NORMS AND BEHAVIORS (CAMPAIGNS)

AL Campaigns include [Integrity Icon](#), [Voice2Rep](#), and the [Accountability Music Awards](#). Progress against our goals in 2021 included growth of campaigns and advocacy activities with an estimated reach of 98 million people with our online content. We also saw new and improved communications outputs, including five new [Accountability-TEA podcasts](#) and listener growth of 15%. In 2021, we gathered substantive evidence through learning reviews of the ways in which our programs, Integrity Icon and Voice2Rep, are influencing behaviors and actions.

Early in 2021, we asked audiences across Africa to nominate their favorite artist whose music is making strides in the fight against corruption in Africa for the Accountability Music Awards. After receiving 35 nominations, five African artists were nominated and over 10,000 votes were cast to decide the winner of this prestigious award was Winky D for his song "Njema!", which encourages people to free themselves from scenarios that will delay progress.

At the country level, we kicked off programming in the DRC, relying heavily on learning from other Francophone countries. In the DRC, Integrity Icon reached 75% of South Kivu province with the support of 50 volunteers, 15 radio stations, and 5 online media outlets with over 75,000 online impressions. We launched Integrity Icon in Somaliland in January, which is proving to be a difficult context, however, and we are learning about the conditions required to successfully run the campaign.

Somaliland and DRC both benefited from lessons learned from our Zimbabwe startup in 2010. We were able to connect new team members across these three countries to share learning on managing implementing partner relationships, quality control, and building monitoring and evaluation systems across partnership networks.

We launched the first round of Integrity Icon in Zimbabwe with a hybrid event, and invited journalists to a briefing that was live streamed to social media channels, generating more than 13,000 views and 118 nominations from citizens across the country, 43% of whom were female.

The AL Liberia team held four Voice2Rep concerts in Grand Bassa, Bong, Montserrado, and Nimba counties from January to April 2021 under the theme ["Know Who To Vote For."](#) Artists from across the four counties auditioned and the four best artists were selected to record a song at AL Liberia's New Media Lab. The songs were then performed and distributed across all four counties. A survey of 1,744 people who attended the concerts showed that 74% understood key accountability messages in each of the songs. Surveys of selected musical artists indicated that Voice2Rep had a substantial impact on their reach. Artist, [Thomas Moseray](#), gained an additional 500 followers on Facebook after being tagged in the live videos of Voice2Rep concerts in Grand Bassa and Montserrado Counties.

In terms of diversity and inclusion we supported activists pushing for [transgender](#) and [LGBTQI+ rights](#); and reforms that benefit [people with disabilities](#) in 2021. Throughout its programming, Accountability Lab works to shift social norms with the idea that observing diversity and inclusion within these settings will encourage people to align their own values with these standards. In Nepal, three of our top five integrity Icons were women and three of our top five Icons have been promoted within their respective government ministries. In South Africa, three of our 2021 film fellows were women, one is a trans-man, and one is a gender non-binary person, selected from 132 total applications.

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, indicators, or matrices. Across the board, more than 75% of participants provided positive feedback for our programs and campaigns. More than 80% of participants indicated that they feel better equipped to work on community issues as a result of our programming.

Through the Accountable Now interview process, we've evaluated our progress across Network Labs under our three core areas of work: campaigns, knowledge, and communities.

EQUIPPING REFORMERS FOR COLLECTIVE ACTION (KNOWLEDGE)

AL Knowledge includes the Accountability Incubator, Integrity Training, and Open Gov Hubs. In 2021 we codified our flagship program, the [Accountability Incubator](#), and grew the program to include 89 participants across 12 countries. This was our largest year of growth for the Incubator yet, with new incubators in DRC, Kenya, Uganda, and Guinea Bissau. We now have an active network of more than 200 "Accountapreneurs" around the world. In Nigeria, our Accountapreneurs created a network of clubs in schools to raise awareness around gender-based violence, working to replace harmful social norms with norms that promote gender equality and non-violence. In Zimbabwe, one of our 2021 Accountapreneurs, Descent Dube, who created the Matobo Youth Development Initiative (MYDI) received funding to conduct training for accountability champions in Matobo District. MYDI has since trained 30 Accountability Champions in Matobo and produced two documentaries addressing development issues in the area.

Additionally, we consolidated the roll-out of the [Integrity Innovation Lab](#), a knowledge and skill-building workshop for civil servants. The new civil service training curriculum is practical with an emphasis on building networks for reform and finding new avenues to push for change. It can be used in a "Training of Trainers" format, which allows for scaling in new and existing Lab countries. We grew the program to include more than 300 participants across Pakistan, Nepal, Niger, and Guinea Bissau. We also expanded our network to include training with and for a variety of leading organizations in the accountability field, including the Global Initiative Against Organized Crime, the United Nations Development Programme in Guinea Bissau, the Hague Academy, and the Mastercard Foundation, among others.



COMMUNITIES

Throughout 2021, our network Labs made contributions to key national and subnational policy changes, including the passage of the Disability Rights Bill in Kaduna State, Nigeria; localization of a Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Policy in Dhangadhi, Nepal; and work with a rural district council through our CivActs partners in Zimbabwe to create new infrastructure for informal trading in Goromonzi. In Liberia, we worked with the National Civil Society Council of Liberia to revise the NGO Aid Policy.

In 2021, we continued our co-Chairpersonship of the C20 Anti-Corruption Working Group, growing the C20 group to 181 participating organizations. One key output of this activity was providing inputs to the G20 on corruption issues, specifically, through a new [G20 Anti-Corruption Working Group Tracker](#). We expanded our coalitions by providing feedback and hosting civil society engagement events for the [Summit for Democracy](#).

In Pakistan, we expanded our CivActs program, where we recruited, trained, and engaged more than 350 volunteers across ten districts in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh provinces to help us identify misinformation and push out [verified information on COVID-19](#). We expanded our Youth Peace Incubation program (YPI) to eight universities, and we forged partnerships with the provincial governments of Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

CHALLENGES

Across our network Labs, Country Directors discussed persistent challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Although we moved quickly to accommodate changes, 2021 was an incredibly challenging time to be pushing for accountability around the world, and for the Lab itself. Several of our network Labs discussed challenges in funding. With the changing funding priorities brought on by COVID-19, our network Labs in Liberia, Mexico, and Nepal, in particular, noted that the fundraising efforts were more difficult than in previous years. Although funding challenges persisted, most countries were still able to execute signature programmes such as Integrity Icon and the Accountability Incubator, utilizing both in person and virtual modalities. In Pakistan, the pandemic triggered turnover of government officials, making it challenging to maintain relationships in a virtual environment.

A lack of digital equity in the countries where we work presented a number of challenges. Internet access had a substantial impact in Liberia, where only 22% of the country has reliable internet access; in South Africa where frequent load shedding prevents residents from having access to the internet at all times of the day; and in Zimbabwe, where the pandemic widened the digital divide between urban and rural areas.

In 2021, many of our flagship programs were reimaged as virtual events to accommodate for public health restrictions on in-person gatherings. The movement to virtual events limited the ability for marginalized communities to view or participate in some events. Lack of in-person engagement also had an impact on volunteer engagement and overall reach on programs like Integrity Icon and Voice2Rep in some countries (South Africa, Nigeria, and Liberia, for example). As a relatively new Lab, our Mexico team found it difficult to compete in the online space with so many CSOs holding virtual events. In Nigeria, lack of internet access limited the ability of low-income groups to vote in the Integrity Icon campaign. In South Africa, restrictions on movement and in-person gatherings hampered the ability of the team to get the word out and generate citizen engagement with the Integrity Icon campaign.

FUTURE ACTIONS

- Restore in-person events, when this can be done safely, to increase participation, reach, and impact of signature programming;
- Expand the Integrity Innovation Lab to additional countries and contexts;
- Continue to collect quantitative data on program outcomes while also looking for qualitative stories that show progress over multiple years;
- Continue to diversify our funding across Network Labs and create emergency funds in each country.



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.

In 2021, the “quality of democracy, market economy, and governance” have declined to their lowest levels since 2004, according to the [Bertelsman Stiftung](#). [Freedom House](#) maintains that democracy and respect for [human rights](#) have declined in 80 countries since the beginning of the pandemic. Equally, many CSOs have found it difficult to adapt during COVID-19. Access to communities has been logistically challenging; the ability to engage online has been mixed; and in many cases budgets have been slashed. Surveys from [Africa](#) to [Asia](#) to [the UK](#) have shown CSOs in crisis.

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to be a moment to reflect and respond to new realities. In many corners of the world, the response to the pandemic has created conditions where public sector corruption has been able to flourish. Notably, this has occurred in areas of the world with previously good reputations in regard to transparency and accountability. Similarly, increasing restrictions on basic civil freedoms have allowed corruption to go unchecked; and the interests of a powerful minority continue to dominate politics and economics globally.

At the same time, 2021 has brought renewed attention to ideas related to accountability, given continued challenges related to authoritarianism and closing civic spaces. There is also a significant new focus on anti-corruption from governments including the U.S. and through multilateral fora like the G20. The Biden Administration has prioritized anti-corruption deterrence and enforcement as a national security interest and has formulated a [whole-of-government approach](#) to combating corruption. The G20 Anti-Corruption Working Group renewed its anti-corruption commitments through its [2022-2024 Action Plan](#).

Mexico’s 2019-2022 [Open Government Partnership \(OGP\) commitments](#) include strategic agendas such as beneficial ownership, illegal surveillance, and arms traffic. Similarly, Nigeria is implementing 16 commitments from its 2019-2020 [OGP Action Plan](#), including fiscal transparency, open budgets, extractive transparency, inclusiveness, improved public service delivery, and implementation of freedom of information legislation. These initiatives have presented new opportunities to expand our reach and renew our programming.

AL COUNTRY-LEVEL TRENDS

Corruption is a constantly evolving global challenge. Several of the countries we work in experienced significant set-backs in the political-economic landscape. In [Mali](#), the military staged a [second coup d'etat](#) in May 2021, and arrested the acting president, Bah N'Daou and his [prime minister, Moctar Ouane](#). Despite plans to transition to civilian rule, the transitional government announced that the November elections would be [rescheduled for February 2022](#). In Somaliland, [police detained almost a dozen opposition candidates](#) in the lead-up to the May 2021 elections. In July of 2021, former South African President, Jacob Zuma was [arrested on contempt charges](#), leading to [riots and looting](#) and the death of 350 people in the resulting violence.

Gender representation in public office remains a challenge in nearly every context in which we work. In January of 2021, just [10% of ministerial positions and 6% of parliamentary seats in Nigeria](#) were held by women. In Nepal, only [30%](#) of public servants are women, and in Pakistan, only [20% of parliamentary seats and 12%](#) of ministerial appointees were women.

Civic space has been under increasing pressure. In Mexico, media outlets and journalists were subject to [election-related removals and pressures](#) in the lead-up to legislative elections in June 2021, indicating a trend of politically-motivated attempts by government actors to censor online freedom of expression.

In June of 2021, the Nigerian government [shut down Twitter](#), preventing citizens from accessing important information on the COVID-19 pandemic and restricting some of our planned engagement activities. In Pakistan, Prime Minister Imran Khan intensified a [government crackdown on NGOs](#) under the pretext that they receive foreign funds to promote an "enemy agenda" and are working against the state. Zimbabwe has seen similar government initiatives that propose to change the regulatory framework and increase surveillance by arguing that [NGOs are run by "terrorist financing."](#)

Despite the challenges, there were some gains. In Liberia, our team was able to help change a policy that was restricting civic space through a meeting with the Minister of Finance. In Somaliland, long-delayed parliamentary and local elections were held in [May 2021](#). The two opposition parties won 52 seats collectively, enough to form a coalition government. At the same time, some of our Labs have also found space to grow - Accountability Lab Pakistan has grown exponentially for example, seeing increases in staff, finances, and program reach.

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 2022 AL Global Strategy Update and AL's general operational policies.

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO ENSURE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE WORK BEYOND THE PROJECT CYCLE? WHAT EVIDENCE DO YOU HAVE OF SUCCESS IN THIS RESPECT?

FUTURE ACTIONS

- Continue to embed sustainability into program design by prioritizing networking, communication, and skill-building among program participants and partners in the design of new projects;
- Incorporate follow-up ancillary programming into post-program timelines and budgets;
- Build sustainably on our existing strengths in order to generate more value for current and future program participants.

At Accountability Lab, we strive to embed sustainability in program design. We are thoughtful about program activities that develop the capacity of program participants in the long-term. On average, more than 80% of participants indicate increased skills and knowledge in post-program surveys. The Lab is viewed as a values-driven organization, due in part to our positive deviance strategy and our people-centered approach to developing and implementing projects. The Lab's [translocal](#) model is a significant strength, which places us in a unique position to generate greater sustainable impact with our global programs.

AL's programmatic strengths when it comes to sustainability include consistent focus on inclusion, proactive solutions, and positivity. The use of arts including [music](#) and [film](#) to engage young people is particularly effective in generating sustainability. In post-program surveys, participants reported sustainable changes in their personal growth and in organizational capabilities for the communities in which they work. The [Civic Action Teams](#) (CivActs) have been deployed to address issues around natural resource management (Liberia and Nigeria), migration (Nepal), and countering violent extremism (Mali). In 2021, we began using the CivActs model in Nigeria, where communities (in particular, women and people with disabilities) are using the structure to advocate for community issues and hold elected officials accountable through community meetings. Through the [Accountability Incubator](#) and film fellowship programs, participants share and develop skills to work independently once they graduate. In Nepal, 75% of participants in the Accountability Incubator move on to have careers in civil society.

Our Network Labs also build sustainability by creating and engaging networks of Integrity Icons and Accountpreneurs. For example, our team in Liberia took extra steps to secure \$3,000 for each 2021 Integrity Icon, sourced from 7 small independent donors in Liberia. The team in Liberia is also working closely with the board to secure additional unrestricted funding for the 2022 budget. In Mexico, the team has kept the Integrity Icon networks connected through "Where Are They Now?" podcasts. In South Africa, the 2021 cohort of Integrity Icons were directly inspired by the 2020 cohort, showing evidence that our programs are increasing conversations around accountability within the civil service and help public servants become increasingly connected in their efforts to make change. Two of the South African Integrity Icons from 2020 and 2021 cohorts are teachers who are now working together on an initiative to keep schools safe.

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 THE FUTURE?

We have learned several overarching lessons that have informed both our overall programming approach and our 2022 strategy updates. We've learned that our key strategic assets are our people, networks, diversity, positivity, knowledge, and ownership of our work. We've learned that we need to do more in terms of integrating programs, building out our research, connecting advocacy efforts, and deepening our networks.

We have incredible people at every level within the organization, and our human capital is our greatest resource. However, we work in a challenging and competitive ecosystem. Through our conversations with our Network Labs, employee retention is a point of concern. Without reliable and diverse funding stream, we often are not able to offer the highest salaries in the field within the counties where we work. We are continuing to center the well-being of our team members in every possible way, improve our talent management, identify and retain the very best people, and to put in place capacity development plans to build or bring in the knowledge we need to achieve our strategic goals.

Across our Network Labs, Country Directors and team members spoke about creating deep networks both from the community level upwards, and from the global or national level downwards, across a variety of different stakeholders. In Nepal, we have seen that it is most effective to bring young people with network and influence into our programs who can then continue to build on their networks to increase the impact of their work. In Mexico, gaining visibility at the national level has been achieved through partnerships with other organizations working on similar issues. In DRC, the team learned that participation of women was limited due to deep-seated cultural beliefs, and have plans to lean on civil society partners, Centre d'études et de documentation économiques, juridiques et sociales in 2022 to work toward greater inclusion.

In Zimbabwe, a collaboration between AL, [Magamba](#), and [Kubatana](#) for the [New Narratives for Accountability in Zimbabwe](#) program helped the Lab gain footing in a new country at a challenging time. AL Zimbabwe has learned that for collaborative programming and partnerships to work, partners must not get caught up in hierarchies, but rather value equality and the assets that each partner brings with trust and respect as a founding principle in program planning and implementation.

At AL, we see ourselves as a learning organization. Adaptive learning is central to everything we do. We understand that we are in a position to try new things, improve what we do, and share insights from those efforts with others. We share our learning internally and externally through our visual arts programs, the [Accountabili-TEA podcast](#), monthly open board calls, weekly learning calls, and [regular learning reports](#). In Nepal, the team has instituted [quarterly reviews](#) for more thorough conversations around progress.

FUTURE ACTIONS

- Continue looking for ways to support our team members;
- Continue to improve our data collection efforts; build learning and training capacity among our teams;
- Continue to share our learning with internal and external stakeholders at every level.

FUTURE ACTIONS

- Continue to share learning publicly through blogs, webinars, open board calls, and other outreach efforts around how we are working towards strategic priorities;
- Further engage Network Labs in conversations about strategic priorities on a regular basis and in weekly learning calls;
- Integrate findings of our [Voice2Rep evaluation](#);
- Use learnings from country teams to improve program inclusion and delivery in 2022.

LEADING BY EXAMPLE

HOW DO YOU DEMONSTRATE EXCELLENCE AROUND STRATEGIC PRIORITIES?

At Accountability Lab, we strive to set an example of transparency, accountability, and adaptive learning in everything we do. We hope that our open [documents, financials, and policies](#) enable our stakeholders to hold us accountable and to plan their partnership with us more effectively. We share lessons across countries through [monthly open board calls](#); and meet global standards when it comes to financial management, safeguarding, and workplace policies. We pride ourselves on taking a [positive approach to our work](#) and find that bolstering others and offering solutions is the most productive and feasible approach, particularly in places where civic space are under threat.

At the country-level, our Network Labs worked to demonstrate excellence around these strategic priorities in 2021 by participating in panel discussions, increasing media presence, and sharing updates and successes through blogs on our AL website. In South Africa, we continued our work on shifting social norms with Tufts University's [Corruption, Justice and Legitimacy Program](#) to better understand the actors, systems, and social norms that impact the efficacy of fire response in Johannesburg, which will help us design future civil service interventions across teams. This partnership evolved from conversations with former Integrity Icons.

In Pakistan, we have received praise from the World Bank for our work on the [Governance and Policy Project in Balochistan](#). AL Pakistan also expanded its community resilience program against COVID-19, where the team recruited, trained, and engaged over 350 volunteers across ten districts in KP and Sindh provinces to help us identify fake news, myths, and misinformation, and disseminate verified information. The team expanded our Youth Peace Incubation program (YPI) to eight universities, and we forged partnerships with the provincial governments of Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Moreover, in 2021, our Network Labs were able to increase their capacity in Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) to improve the accurate documentation of outcomes through both reporting and blog writing. We trained key learning staff on data collection and evaluation methods. With the input of our country teams, we have improved programmatic indicators and organizational KPIs to better assess impact and progress. Our Network Labs are able to better demonstrate excellence around strategic priorities with new tools and capacity for measurement.

WHAT EVIDENCE IS THERE THAT YOUR EXPERTISE IS RECOGNIZED AND WELCOMED BY YOUR PEERS, PARTNERS, AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS IN THE COUNTRY?

AL is seen as an innovative and influential partner by a variety of peers and partners, both in specific countries and at the global level. This has translated into media coverage, partnerships, accolades and opportunities to speak at high profile events. Our efforts have been globally recognised and we are often invited to share our thoughts including, in 2021, through the [Open Government Partnership](#) in the co-creation of goals related to government accountability; the [C20 Anti-Corruption Working Group](#); and the [World Economic Forum](#) as a means to influence private sector efforts around anti-corruption. In 2021, we were also invited to join the [Transparency, Accountability, and Participation \(TAP\) Network](#) as [co-chair of the Steering Committee](#). TAP is a network of civil society organizations working together to advance SDG 16 and enhance accountability for the 2030 Agenda. We've used our expertise in accountability, gender equality, policy advocacy, capacity building and training, and education to shape the TAP Network's 2020-2022 agenda.

We see our rapid growth as evidence that peers, partners, and stakeholders recognize our expertise and welcome our creative approach to building good governance. Accountability Lab started as an experiment- a desire to build a movement of individuals and organizations that have the tools and resources to build accountability through positive and creative approaches. Over the last nine years, we have grown the lab from a pilot in Nepal to a translocal network of 12 local Labs and programs in an additional three countries, with more than 100 staff members and over 200 volunteers. Our [Civic Action Teams](#) now cover five countries, and we've grown the Accountability Incubator to include 89 participants across 12 countries with new Incubators in DRC, Kenya, Uganda, and Guinea Bissau. The Integrity Innovation Lab grew to over 300 participants in four countries (Pakistan, Nepal, Nigeria, and Guinea Bissau). Despite the challenges of the on-going pandemic, we've opened new Labs in [DRC](#) and [Somaliland](#).

In 2021, two of our South African 2020 Integrity Film Fellows and one from Nigeria were [profiled by Authority Magazine](#) in an article about social-impact filmmakers who are changing the world. In Pakistan, we partnered with [University of Karachi](#), Federal Urdu University of Arts, Science, and Technology, the Women's University of Swabi, Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan, University of Central Punjab, and Muhammad Nawaz Sharif University of Agriculture Multan to Launch the [Youth Peace Incubation Program](#). The team in Pakistan also worked with the Chamber of Commerce to conduct an [assessment](#) of the efficacy of policy tools to meet the Open Government Partnership Action Plan.

In Mexico, our Country Director, Eva Sander, was invited to teach Finance for Entrepreneurship at [Centro University](#), a school known for social innovation, particularly the Social Design Hub. In South Africa, our 2020 Integrity Icon and pediatric public healthcare worker, Sarah Dlamini's writing on integrity has been [featured](#) on national news and information platforms. In Mali, our team has been invited to discuss governance-related issues with [The Central Office for the Fight Against Illicit Enrichment \(OCLEI\)](#). In South Africa, our work with Tufts University is expanding AL South Africa's network through engagement with new stakeholders, including city officials.

FUTURE ACTIONS

- Continue to facilitate conversations with relevant stakeholders at the local, national, and international levels;
- Consider additional relevant partners that may be helpful bolstering outcomes in the countries in which we work.

INTERNALLY

Accountability Lab is dedicated to encouraging a supportive and inclusive culture across our teams. Our aim is to ensure that all employees and job applicants are given equal opportunity and that our organization is representative of all parts of society. Each employee is respected, valued, and able to give their best as a result. At AL, we believe that a more diverse and inclusive workplace fosters greater innovation and strengthens progress toward our mission.

This is also the case at the country level. In particular, our AL Mexico team not only prioritizes diversity in terms of race, gender, and sexual orientation, the team also includes several neurodivergent individuals. While this can present challenges, the team finds it important to facilitate work-arounds so that the special skills and talents of neurodivergent team members can be utilized. It also creates the opportunity to foster a workplace where everyone feels safe. In Pakistan, the team includes people living with disabilities and places a priority on respecting all religions, cultural beliefs, and traditions without placing limits on which holidays are celebrated and which languages are spoken in the office.

Additionally, AL has robust safeguarding, duty of care, social media, and equity [policies](#) which are reviewed regularly. We do not participate in male-only panels, and have put financial resources behind opportunities for women and Global South staff members to participate in workshops, working groups, and conferences. All AL offices prioritize gender equality in their selection and hiring process and AL Network Labs participate in inclusion training on subjects including gender, LGBTQAI+, people with disabilities, and more.

HOW DOES THE LAB PRACTICE BEING INCLUSIVE AND PROTECTING HUMAN RIGHTS, INCLUDING PROMOTING WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY?

PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

Throughout AL's programming, we prioritize recruiting and engaging diverse participants from all communities and levels of society. This year, 65 percent of our [Open Government Partnership Summit Youth Delegates](#) were female or non-binary, with areas of expertise in disability inclusion, digital inclusion, citizen participation, and more. AL Nepal pioneered a new campaign, [Gov-HER-nance](#), in collaboration with female local government representatives, which aimed to bring new voices and ideas to challenges in gender equity, local development and open government. In Mali, the [YALI Film Fellowship](#) invited 10 young women who have creative ideas about leadership, accountability, and gender equality to a training camp in short film production and directing techniques. The participants made 10 short films on themes that reflect realities in their communities - from gender-based violence to the role of women in the arts. In South Africa, our 2021 Film Fellowship included three women, one trans-gender man, and one gender non-binary person. Over the three-month program, fellows participated in social-impact storytelling curriculum, shooting and directing, and on-going mentorship. Each fellow produced a solution-driven short film about the challenges in their respective communities. These ranged in subject, showcasing people and initiatives responding to substance abuse and hunger to the impact being made by innovative community workers to unlikely gender-justice advocates.

As an organization, AL has worked to prioritize the intersection of democracy and inclusion, particularly for women, youth, marginalized groups, and around Global South participation, placing an emphasis on democratic and citizen safeguarding. In November of 2021, in response to the Biden Administration's Summit for Democracy and Year of Action, Accountability Lab set up the unofficial website for the [Summit for Democracy](#) on behalf of civil society to help coordinate inputs on the Summit's key themes: defending against authoritarianism, addressing and fighting corruption and promoting respect for human rights. We saw 35,000+ page views- with many from countries that were not invited to the Summit and we saw an overwhelming number of [resources](#), blogs and other content sent to the website.

FUTURE ACTIONS

- Continue our work to include young people, people with disabilities and those that might be most excluded from decision-making due to language, geography, religion or other issues;
- Continue to center our work around learning and increase access to diversity and inclusion training for staff members;
- Continue our work with the Summit for Democracy as a Civil Society Leader.

HOW DO YOU MINIMIZE 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?

We aim to measure the impact of our work in ethical, non-extractive ways that place a primacy on collective contributions to accountability and lifting up the stories of our communities and networks. Issues of safeguarding, preventing sexual harassment, and mitigating external risks are taken into consideration by all Network Labs when creating and implementing programming. AL Network Labs have adopted AL Global's anti-harassment and whistleblower [policies](#). All staff members are required to read and agree to abide by the code of conduct, staff handbook, gender and equity policy, and social media policy when they join the organization, including interns and fellows.

The Accountability Lab is fully committed to safeguarding people in vulnerable situations. We have a zero tolerance policy when it comes to harassment and abuse. We advance this policy through the following vehicles:

- Awareness: Through bi-annual safeguard training sessions, AL staff are educated on safeguard issues around children and persons in vulnerable situations and the risks posed to these groups.
- Prevention: Through awareness and good practice, we ensure that staff and those who work with Accountability Lab minimize the risks to those in vulnerable situations.
- Reporting: Staff are informed of what steps to take where concerns arise regarding the safety of children and adults in vulnerable situations.
- Response: Ensuring that action is taken to support and protect vulnerable populations where concerns arise regarding possible abuse.

In 2021, we focused on leading and field-building around duty of care issues, including through a new partnership with the [Funder Safeguarding Collaborative](#) to institutionalize safeguarding protocols into grant-making and support non-profit organizations in codifying the safety and security of their staff, beneficiaries, and partners. We also worked to bring together similar initiatives in an effort to create a more unified movement around these issues across civil society.

FUTURE ACTIONS

- Renew safeguard training bi-annually for all staff members and incorporate safeguard training in the onboarding process across all Network Labs.
- Encourage learning and feedback sessions after programs to mitigate risks and counter unintended negative impacts.

FUTURE ACTIONS

- Develop a deeper focus on environmental justice throughout our programming - including the strengthening inclusive governance of natural resources, climate adaptation and resilience programs, and an equitable transition to clean energy;
- Assess the possibility of scaling the Sustainability Edition of Integrity Icon across other countries and Network Labs.

HOW DO YOU DEMONSTRATE RESPONSIBLE STEWARDSHIP FOR THE ENVIRONMENT?

Accountability Lab recognizes that its day-to-day operations impact the environment in a number of ways, and we are committed to minimizing the potentially harmful effects. While acknowledging the importance of personal contact and face-to-face dialogue, Accountability Lab minimizes the number of in-person meetings by using video, teleconferencing, and virtual gatherings as often as possible. Board meetings are only held in person once a year to offset environmental costs; and flights are only taken by staff when necessary.

The Accountability Lab, as far as possible, and where available, uses recycled paper for office printing. When printing for internal use Accountability Lab prints in black and white and double-sided. We also prioritize environmental sustainability by purchasing refurbished laptops and electronic devices.

At the country level, Mexico introduced a sustainability edition of Integrity Icon. Winners included Raúl Samuel Ulloa Herrera, whose work cares for the marine ecosystem, Mirelle Segovia Martin, who works in renewable energy; Kenia Montiel Pimentel, who teaches her community to produce their own food and to collect rainwater to reduce hunger and promote sustainability; and Efraím Castellanos Frayre who conducts best practice trainings in the renewable energy sector.

Our Network Labs also demonstrate personal responsibility for stewardship for the environment. For example, in Nepal, our team has incorporated a public garden with bee keeping at the Hub; in Nigeria, the office is now run on 100% solar energy; and in Pakistan and South Africa, the teams reduce plastic waste by providing dishes and cutlery in office kitchens.



OUR APPROACH TO CHANGE

LIST KEY STAKEHOLDERS - WHAT PROCESS DO YOU USE TO IDENTIFY THEM?

Over the past nine years, we have actively developed coalitions and networks with individuals, non-government groups, civil society partners, government agencies and unlikely actors in ways that can lead to long-term change. Accountability Lab is recognized in multiple contexts for our creative and positive approach to problem solving, much of which we attribute to the building of unlikely networks. This includes musicians, young people, visual artists, and media outlets. Expanding and developing stakeholders and partnerships is a key aspect of our [AL Communities](#) vertical. In an effort to determine whether or not we share similar values – partnership and stakeholder relations are guided by a [partnership policy](#). We work with key stakeholders in four categories: program participants, civil society organizations, government, and private sector partners.

Program participants are our most important and valuable partners and stakeholders. Because the Lab focuses on capacity building, we rely on our program participants to continue working on their initiatives, ideas, and solutions to build sustainable progress on accountability issues in their communities. These stakeholders include Integrity Icons, Accountpreneurs, Voice2Rep Artists, and civil servants who have moved through our Integrity Innovation Labs.

For civil society organizations, we focus on partners with similar interest in good governance and who are interested in amplifying our work. We rely on coalitions such as [Corruption Watch](#) or [BudgIt](#) and smaller, dynamic groups like Activate! to support the Integrity Icon campaign in their respective countries. In July, AL Liberia partnered with the [West African Civil Society Institute](#) and [KEEP Liberia](#), for example, to conduct a two-day Social Accountability and Virtual Learning workshop with 32 national CSOs from across the country.

Government stakeholders include national, federal and local government agencies or ministries. Through Integrity Icon, we work with civil servants within their respective departments, including the Department of Public Service Administration in South Africa, the Ministry of Justice in Mali, and the Office of the Statistician General in Nigeria. In 2021, we worked with local elected officials in Nepal to design and implement [gender-friendly quarantine facilities](#). We also worked with the Government of Korea to host an [OGP Virtual Bootcamp](#) for young people.

At AL, we know that the private sector has an important role to play in achieving the sustainable development goals. We work with businesses that follow socially accountable practices at every level. In 2021, AL Nepal worked with the [Center for International Private Enterprise](#) (CIPE) to bring together key leaders from the private sector, local and provincial governments, and civil society for Public-Private Dialogues: discussions to strengthen Public-Private-Partnerships (PPP) in Nepal. Through the project, AL Nepal leveraged its network, relationships, and resources to create feedback loops, enabling the private sector to integrate their voices into policies, programs, and budgets. The Public-Private Dialogues and other supporting activities strengthened bottom-up accountability. The focus was on the subnational level where we felt the most constructive conversations could be held. The Lab is also an active member of the [World Economic Forum's Partnering Against Corruption Initiative](#) (PACI) and the [OECD Blue Dot Network](#)- both of which largely include corporate actors.

Our Network Labs work with partners and stakeholders based on individual or organizational values. For this reason, we avoid working with individuals and organizations that have a record of corruption issues. Network Labs engage in stakeholder mapping exercises to identify the level of importance and influence of each stakeholder. Stakeholders are generally identified before or during the grant application process, so we can begin working with relevant partners from the outset of the grant. The selection of stakeholders is dependent on the particular goals of the project or program in each particular context.

FUTURE ACTIONS

- Deepen the constructive partnerships we have maintained in 2021;
- Continue being strategic about where, how and when we create new collaborations;
- Continue engaging stakeholders throughout the program cycle and beyond to ensure sustainability and continued progress on issues of accountability we aim to address.

FUTURE ACTIONS

- Continue our creative approach to drawing marginalized groups into the governance process;
- Replicate Gov-HER-nance in other country contexts;
- Document and share success stories on larger and wider platforms.

HOW DO YOU ENSURE THAT YOU REACH OUT TO THOSE WHO ARE IMPACTED OR CONCERNED BY YOUR WORK?

Accountability Lab makes a deliberate effort to drive ideas from the ground upwards. This includes collecting nominations and votes from citizens for Integrity Icon, bolstering the ideas of young people for the Accountability Incubator, and creating citizen feedback loops through Civic Action Teams (CivActs). Our Network Labs employ creative methods to reach those impacted or concerned with our work including through networks, radio, youth clubs, social media, WhatsApp messages, and rap news.

In particular, Accountability Lab's CivActs is a pioneering community feedback process to close the loop on citizen challenges related to everything from migration and natural resource management, to the COVID-19 response and misinformation.

In Zimbabwe, the CivActs campaign set out to bolster the relationship between citizens and local municipalities and to foster a sense of accountability and greater levels of trust. Community Frontline Associates (CFAs) used a variety of offline and online methods including listening sessions and Whatsapp messages, to reach out citizens, particularly women and young people, positioning them as allies for local leaders to lean on in the co-creation of solutions to corruption challenges. Sustained engagement has built a feedback model between AL and citizens who can define the challenges through community consultations, focus groups, and surveys. Information was then fed back to communities via digital bulletins and community radio shows.

In Pakistan, the team identified remote regions for their CivActs campaign, where communities were unable to access essential pandemic health information after the outbreak of COVID-19. CFAs from these communities were trained in how to identify and mitigate mis- and disinformation. Whatsapp groups, digital bulletins, and community radio were used for easy dissemination of valid and accurate health information with content drafted in multiple languages and displayed in a way that was easily understood and accessible.

In Nepal, Gov-Her-Nance pioneered a community development feedback model with the Dhangadhi sub metropolitan city. AL Nepal held a needs assessment workshop with the Deputy Mayor's office to identify community priorities and challenges. Eighteen Inclusion Fellows were recruited (representing the LGBTQI+ and disabled communities) and trained on advocacy, storytelling and filmmaking. They engaged with a variety of urban, peri-urban, and rural communities, hosting policy dialogues centered on how to localize and embed Nepal's gender equality and social inclusion policy. They also facilitated community-level budget consultation processes, helping implement a public participation model that created space for the inclusion of views from minority communities. In all, 17 proposals were adopted and incorporated into a localized gender policy.

HOW, SPECIFICALLY, DO YOU MAXIMIZE COORDINATION WITH OTHERS OPERATING IN THE SAME SECTORAL AND GEOGRAPHIC SPACE, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO NATIONAL AND LOCAL ACTORS?

At AL, we work to participate in relevant coalitions and communities around accountability, transparency and open government at the local, national, and international levels. We have excellent networks in communities and access to rooms where policy decisions are made. This allows us to channel the ideas directly from communities upwards to inform policies, practices and procedures, with the goal of shifting power back to citizens and communities. 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](#).

At the country level, our Network Labs work to partner with civil society organizations in their respective countries. For example, in Mexico, our team was asked to be part of a regional committee in Oaxaca with the citizen participation organization, [Comité de Participación Ciudadana](#) (CPC) to support citizen participation in the budget and policy making process. In Nigeria, the Lab works with the [Open Government Partnership Youth Network](#), specifically on gender equity issues. In South Africa, the team worked with [Ahmed Kathrada Foundation](#) and Activate! to pilot Youth4CivicChange - a citizen participation initiative with young people between the ages of 18 and 26 focusing on three topics: the role of local government, what young people should expect from their respective municipalities, and the role of their ward councilors and how to hold them accountable. In Niger, our team works with the [High Authority for the Fight Against Corruption \(HALCIA\)](#), and is a member of the [Alliance Against Inequities](#).

FUTURE ACTIONS

- Position the Lab to take on two further roles - as a campaigner, to build and support social movements; and as a challenger, advocating for political change.
- Work to ground national, regional and global advocacy efforts in local ideas, data and thinking;
- Work to connect our campaigns to movements, shared causes, and locally-resonant issues across and between Network Labs.



FUTURE ACTIONS

- Continue initiatives to collect and respond to feedback from stakeholders, particularly women, young people, and those from marginalized communities;
- Conduct a more formal review of how stakeholder feedback is applied to our learning and programming.

OUR APPROACH TO CHANGE

HOW DO YOU COLLECT FEEDBACK FROM STAKEHOLDERS? WHAT EVIDENCE CAN YOU PROVIDE TO DEMONSTRATE YOUR ORGANIZATION IS RESPONSIVE TO STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK?

Learning is central to our strategy. Our teams hold regular meetings with stakeholders and distribute surveys to generate feedback so that we can improve program outcomes. At the end of each program, we conduct learning debriefs with our partner organizations and include recommendations in our next round of programming and in our reporting. In addition to post program surveys, we gather real-time feedback data during the program cycle to understand any need to course-correct.

For example, AL Pakistan undertook a program designed to deliver an accountable leadership course with support from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), with the goal of creating a more responsible civil service. The post-program results indicated that up to 25% of the participants had cheated on their final exam. Based on these results, the team decided to continue the program at a different institution with more senior leadership. NED appreciated the honest feedback and the ability of our team to course-correct. Ultimately, this feedback led to a significant change in the design of the program at the donor level.

Following the unprecedented riots in South Africa in July 2021, AL SA noted that among the numerous commentators and constituencies which had been afforded the platforms to make meaning of the events, few-to-none targeted young people. AL SA undertook a listening campaign with young people to hear what they thought about the riots, why they believed they were happening, and what should be done in response. We solicited written responses and audio clips from 15 young people across South Africa to respond to a set of structured questions with the goal of bringing youth perspectives and proposals to South Africa's governance and accountability challenges following the July 2021 riots. These responses were formatted into an op-ed series, with the audio clips being published in a podcast series through which we launched our Accountabili-TEA South Africa podcast. The media package was published through a partnership with the national youth-driven news and information outlet [The Daily Vox](#).

At Accountability Lab, we use the five key characteristics of our [translocal network](#) to engage stakeholders throughout the project cycle and in the decision-making process. First, translocal networks bring together emergent ideas that are local, or in other words- grassroots. In terms of governance, this means thinking about democracy tools that communities use to push for accountability locally. The fact that these efforts are indigenous is important because those nearest to the problems are most likely to understand and solve them. Translocal networks are about proximity.

Second, translocal networks evolve in ways that allow for learning to be disseminated across the network to inform and improve practice in real-time. The networks are locally active but globally connected. Hubs in the network can draw on local learning from elsewhere and integrate these ideas into their own specific contexts as needed and as they grow. This is very different to a large international organization working through local offices to deliver programs- with the local offices acting as implementation mechanisms that are not part of the design or decision-making process. These systems can often struggle to solve development challenges because the top-down model is too expensive and bureaucratic; and is not nimble enough to respond to rapidly changing circumstances.

PROVIDE EVIDENCE TO SHOW STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT THROUGHOUT THE PROJECT CYCLE, INCLUDING IN DECISION MAKING PROCESSES.

Third, while translocal networks grow and replicate organically as they evolve, improve and connect. The reason this is feasible, in ways that are different from top-down scaling efforts, is because translocal networks allow for and encourage the diffusion of shared values and principles. This makes these networks sustainable over time as they are driven by collective understandings and energies, not larger institutional or commercial incentives. These movements put their shared values front and center and this drives commitment and impact. Other organizations are acting as facilitators, finding intelligent ways to fund, support and share lessons among these movements as part of larger networks. So while the movements themselves are focusing on their own issues, there is an eco-system that begins to emerge that allows for collective learning.

Fourth, translocal networks help to create a shared discourse and identity, implicitly in what they do and explicitly through their messaging around the cause. This allows them to build narratives of change that provide an alternative to the status quo and the entrenched systems that perpetuate it. When it comes to corruption, the discourse can be relentlessly negative- with stories every day about graft and theft of public resources, particularly at the moment as governments pour billions of dollars into the COVID-19 response. This saps hope and perpetuates the sense that it is impossible to beat corruption; and also dissuades young people with integrity from entering government. Our work, especially through programs like Integrity Icon, flips this narrative on its head, not by "naming and shaming" the wrong-doers, but by "naming and faming" the do-gooders through large-scale, media-savvy national campaigns. This begins to build a different story that people can get behind, ensure solidarity among reformers across contexts and even [shift the norms](#) that drive corrupt behavior in the first place.

Fifth, and finally, effective translocal networks find ways to partner, support each other, and amplify the impact of their efforts. This involves sharing resources and capacities and putting the eco-system as a whole ahead of individual or organizational recognition or goals. It is these kinds of initiatives that are truly building the fabric for social change. We at the Accountability Lab are part of another initiative called [Catalyst 2030](#) - a global movement of social entrepreneurs and innovators that is working together to achieve the SDGs.

So, the way to ensure more equitable power is through the growth of networks that are grassroots, learning-focused, organic, values-based and partner oriented. These translocal efforts are locally embedded, led by the communities they serve and sustainable over time. And they partner with governments, the private sector and donors in ways that are strategic and add value to their own goals- not in a way that is directed from the top down.

AL Staff, participants, and partners contribute input and feedback throughout the project cycle from conception to closeout and learning. Here's how we facilitate stakeholder engagement and feedback throughout the program cycle:

Conception – All programming is conceived in response to a challenge, issue or opportunity that arises within the realm of good governance, corruption, and accountability and is adapted according to the input we receive directly from the communities we work with. For example, AL South Africa developed [the film fellowship](#) as a result of an overwhelming response to a programmatic need - filming of Integrity Icons.

Design – We often replicate programs across countries. This is not to say that these are transplanted wholesale, instead, once conceptualized, the program design is heavily reliant on research and knowledge from AL staff and program participants to ground the programming in the local context. In Nigeria, the team consults previous Integrity Icons on upcoming projects that relate to the Icons’ areas of expertise or respective area of governance to use their input in program design. During this phase, and depending on the program, we may conduct a baseline study to measure outcomes and determine if program activities should be adjusted in future iterations.

Implementation – AL programming is designed to be iterative and flexible to adjust to changing priorities and needs. For this reason, we rely on stakeholder feedback during the implementation process to ensure that program activities are effective and relevant. In Liberia, for example, our team received feedback that music from Voice2Rep was not widely available, so the team found new platforms to make the songs available, including Spotify and through WhatsApp messaging.

Closeout and Learning – Learning is a key component of our work. Teams use the closeout phase of a project or program to debrief with staff and partners. We document learning in subsequent programming and reporting. We also conduct post-program surveys with participants and incorporate the feedback into reporting, ancillary, and future programming.

This process is similar across Network Labs, for example, for the Supporting Public-Private Partnership Development Program, AL Nepal conducted a total of 4 baseline surveys prior to each Public Partnership Discussion in both provinces during the project period. A total of 197 responses were received from the baseline surveys. These surveys were crucial in gauging the knowledge and perception of relevant public and private sector stakeholders on environmental and social safeguards and standards regarding collaborations between the public and the private sectors.

FUTURE ACTIONS

- Embed stakeholder feedback into the program planning process
- Continue building momentum around our core concept of a translocal network
- Look for ways to further engage stakeholders in the program design and delivery process from startup through closeout and through the next program cycle, particularly to increase sustainability



WHAT IS SOME OF THE POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE FEEDBACK YOUR ORGANIZATION HAS RECEIVED FROM STAKEHOLDERS? WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO TAKE THESE INTO ACCOUNT? HOW HAVE YOU INCORPORATED THEM IN FUTURE PLANS?

Across the board, more than 75% of participants provided positive feedback about our programs and campaigns, specifically on training materials, practical examples, staff preparedness, mentorship, and network-building.

AL has received positive feedback from donors, partners, beneficiaries, and Country Directors on the reflective learning mindset of the AL and our emphasis on working at grassroots level to funnel ideas upwards; our emphasis on creativity; fresh, positive, and innovative values; unique approach in “naming and faming”; rare success in finding the “champions” within government capable of driving reform; our ability to remain agile in decision-making and operations; and focus on youth.

At AL, we use constructive feedback from post-program surveys to implement improvements to design and delivery in future iterations of each program. In 2021, program feedback was overall positive with improvement areas of note including gender diversity and the inclusion of rural participants in certain countries. Beyond constructive feedback from program participants, Network Labs did not report a substantial amount of negative feedback. There was a small amount of feedback we were unable to implement due to a misunderstanding in core activities of the Lab. Namely, potential participants and program partners understood the Lab as a local funder, rather than a convener and catalyst. To counter this misunderstanding, our Network Lab teams are working to clarify the role of the Lab during participant and partner meetings.

In 2021, there were areas of our current strategy where we did not manage everything we had hoped, or our assumptions were proven wrong. There were several parts of our work in which we did not make as much progress as we would have liked. These included:

i) Media accountability and storytelling - while our work to counter COVID-19 misinformation has grown, we hoped to begin to focus more intentionally on local story-telling and narrative-building within specific communities and have not had the bandwidth to do so.

ii) Building our Integrity Icon networks - while we have made significant progress building networks among our Integrity Icon winners within countries, 2021 was the year we hoped to begin to connect networks more intentionally across countries. However, resource and capacity constraints, along with changing COVID-19 dynamics, have prevented this.

iii) New program partnerships - we have learned some important lessons about how we embed our positive way of working and our values in new contexts with new partners. We have learned that generating buy-in requires significant investment of time and resources (human and financial) to build trust and demonstrate the long-term value of the translocal model. The inability to travel due to COVID has also made building partnerships more difficult.

FUTURE ACTIONS

- Recruitment for a media incubator is underway in South Africa, with the incubator beginning in early 2022;
- Build out partnerships with solutions journalism and creative media-makers across country contexts;
- Build-out sector and topic specific learning groups within the larger Icon network.

HOW DO YOU ENSURE PARTNERS YOU WORK WITH, INCLUDING INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANIZATIONS, RETAIN THE CAPACITY THEY HAVE GAINED BEYOND THE PROJECT CYCLE?

FUTURE ACTIONS

- Improve follow-up to our programs in ways that further engage stakeholders in our work and improves sustainability of our impact;
- Create templates and guidelines for ancillary programming as well as a database of partners, resources, and activities that can be used to further build capacity;
- Look for ways to share resources between countries and across programs.

By focusing on skill development and network-building, AL programs are designed to be self-reinforcing and sustainable. We work to retain capacity through three programmatic elements: knowledge, networks, and values.

Knowledge – Much of AL’s programming involves knowledge building around tangible skills. For example, film fellows learn filmmaking skills, CivActs enumerators and journalists learn story-telling and interviewing skills, and Integrity Icons involves ancillary programming to build the skills of both the Icons and young people you aspire to work in public service. In 2021, AL Liberia was able to offer their Integrity Icons a small amount of seed funding to continue their projects. Similarly, AL Pakistan offers financial resources to program participants who are using the skills they gained through an AL program to create their own program, company, or solution. Across our Network Labs, teams pass along funding opportunities and regularly connect with Integrity Icons to offer them support.

Networks - Network Labs facilitate networks through both formal and informal means. Our teams work to connect Integrity Icons across cohorts to facilitate greater resource sharing and mobilization. Our teams in Liberia and Nepal send monthly newsletters to keep in touch with program participants. We also use unconventional methods of communication, including WhatsApp groups, to keep Icons and Accountpreneurs connected and engaged.

Values – Throughout our programming, we focus on accountability as a value through demonstrating integrity, practicality, humility, collaboration and innovation. We also believe that accountability is a skill that can be learned and applied across a number of good governance issues. We use knowledge building and networks to create a consistent dialogue that reinforces conversations about accountability as a value.



FUTURE ACTIONS

- Examine where we can share best practices in research and evidence gathering across countries;
-
- Consider creating a mechanism to ensure that lessons learned are iterated across teams and integrated into programming for the following years' program cycle;
-
- Strategize around using program learning to further inform our advocacy positions.

HOW DO YOU IDENTIFY AND GATHER EVIDENCE REGARDING THE ROOT CAUSES OF THE PROBLEMS YOU ARE TRYING TO ADDRESS AND USE THIS TO SUPPORT YOUR ADVOCACY POSITIONS?

Our Network Labs' work is informed primarily by in-person engagement, desk research on publicly available reports, articles, and policy documents, baseline and impact studies, and surveys carried out by the teams and through our Civic Action Teams (CivActs).

CivActs is a citizen feedback platform designed to ensure accountability in the development and governance process and work across our teams in Mali, Nepal, Pakistan, Liberia, Niger, and Zimbabwe. Communities select dedicated groups of volunteers as Community Frontline Associates, who act as two-way information collection and dissemination units, gathering information on critical problems through community surveys then relaying this information to our dedicated teams who coordinate with local and national power holders. We then ensure validated information is disseminated back down to communities through local radio, community meetings, and infographics in local languages. This process not only helps our teams better understand the root causes of the problems we are trying to address, it also helps government officials better understand and solve community problems from the ground up.

All members of our Network Labs teams are local residents who possess contextual knowledge regarding the root causes of the problems we address. Many of them have worked in governance and civil society, sometimes for many years, before they come to work for Accountability Lab. We also use lessons learned from previous Lab projects and consultation with partner organizations and citizens on an ongoing basis through feedback sessions. In Mexico, our team meets with stakeholders twice a month to monitor good governance-related policy changes and is actively involved in governance working groups.

HOW DO YOU ENSURE THE INTENDED/TARGETED STAKEHOLDERS SUPPORT YOUR ADVOCACY WORK AND VALUE THE RESULTING CHANGES?

At Accountability Lab, one of our main areas of focus includes influencing policies, processes and practices around critical accountability issues, through growing coalitions and advocating for change, for example through the [Civic Action Teams](#) (CivActs) program and our advocacy through fora including the [G20](#).

From the onset of a project, teams identify stakeholders who have similar goals and objectives to create synergy and ownership. We focus on building long-term relationships and inclusive networks and closing feedback loops. We have learned that over time, listening to stakeholders and keeping them informed has helped in building a wider base of support for the resulting change. As a result, more stakeholders are demonstrating support for AL programs. We source information and support from the ground-up through our Civic Action Teams, as described above; and collect nominations directly from citizens for our Integrity Icon campaigns to bolster legitimacy.

In Pakistan, the team translates all written materials into Urdu, Sindhi, Pashto, and Punjabi and holds events in local languages. In Liberia, the team worked in 2021 to establish links between stakeholders by inviting legislators to join them at a national meeting with youth organizations.

In Nepal, the team created Policy Parks - an open platform for intellectual debate and enlightening conversations with leaders, change makers, opinion builders, and social entrepreneurs. These serve as a space for like-minded individuals to identify problems and discuss possibilities to make Nepal a better place to live. Through Policy Parks, the AL Nepal team uses the power of unlikely networks to push for collective action on social change, spark discussions on accountability issues, and foster constructive dialogue on new ways of living with democracy.

Policy Parks started as Accountability Collectives, a way to connect like minded individuals during the pandemic. The program has now turned into a platform to encourage co-learning, co-sharing and collaboration between people from diverse backgrounds to develop compelling narratives around accountability, democracy, and economic prosperity in Nepal. Participants have discussed various accountability issues, including climate change, gender, and the economy.

FUTURE ACTIONS

- Begin connecting our campaigns to movements, shared causes, and locally-resonant issues;
- Ground national, regional and global advocacy efforts in local ideas, data and thinking.

ARE ANNUAL BUDGETS, POLICIES, EVALUATIONS, EXECUTIVE REMUNERATION, AND VITAL STATISTICS ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION EASILY AVAILABLE? PROVIDE WEBSITE LINKS AND HIGHLIGHT MEMBERSHIP IN INITIATIVES SUCH AS IATI.

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. In 2021, we included 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. We are a member of IATI and have two projects linked on the [D-Portal](#).

All Labs use Quickbooks online and report financial data in full and on time to Boards of Directors. All financial policies and plans in place, in keeping with international best practice. A CFR Uniform Guidance Financial Audit for the US Government for the USAID grant with Zimbabwe. AL provides global information in other platforms such as [IATI](#) and [Guidestar](#) where 990's, which include key donor, remuneration and income data can be found and downloaded for free.

FUTURE ACTIONS

- Continue our efforts to post data through online platforms to increase transparency;
- Share evaluations publicly, including internal program evaluations and the Annual Country Team Accountable Now Report.

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?

At AL, we are striving to create a transparent culture and one where women and men are valued equally, treated respectfully, where harassment and discrimination are not tolerated, and where staff members feel safe to voice their opinions on any subject. We value employee contributions and work to ensure both internal and external equity. We define and document the responsibilities, requirements, duties, conditions, environment, and other aspects of a job and work with each team member after three months to develop personal key performance indicators.

In Pakistan, the team organizes salaries in terms of pay scale, hiring personnel at a pay rate that matches the average salary in the nonprofit sector, and offering a 15% higher wage than the average for senior-level positions. The team in Liberia is making a deliberate effort to close the pay gap between male and female employees and bring female employees into more senior positions. In South Africa, the team is working to close the pay gap between senior-level and junior-level employees and to create a framework for how to move up within the organization.

FUTURE ACTIONS

- Conduct a pay-equity analysis for AL Global and across Network Labs;
- Review and update our compensation policy.

HOW DO YOU ENSURE PRIVACY RIGHTS AND PROTECT PERSONAL DATA?

When dealing with the personal information of our donors or program participants, AL is cognizant of both personal privacy and legal responsibilities related to protecting sensitive information. This includes the protection of personally identifiable information that is involved in data collection, storage, and organizational use. In general, we keep data safe by using cloud services, backup, and restore protocols.

In particular, our CivActs teams are responsible for gathering sensitive information from individuals who may be in positions of vulnerability. 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. 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.

Additionally, AL abides by law, policies, and best practices in each country that keep sensitive data from falling into the wrong hands. These features vary on both a national and a global level, and require our teams to determine national laws and regulations on data privacy. In South Africa, for example, our team abides by the [Protection of Personal Information \(POPI\)](#) Act when undertaking all programming activities.

FUTURE ACTIONS

- Ensure country teams have access to the most updated data privacy laws in their respective countries
- AL Global and Network Labs revisit digital well-being and safety and security through our Duty of Care initiative.



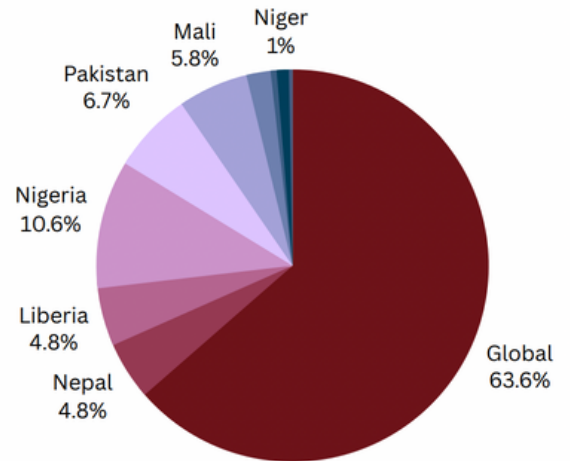
WHO ARE THE FIVE LARGEST SINGLE DONORS AND WHAT IS THE MONETARY VALUE OF THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS? WHERE PRIVATE INDIVIDUAL DONORS CANNOT BE NAMED DUE TO REQUESTED ANONYMITY, PLEASE EXPLAIN WHAT SAFEGUARDS ARE IN PLACE TO ENSURE THAT ANONYMOUS CONTRIBUTIONS DO NOT HAVE AN UNFAIR INFLUENCE ON ORGANIZATIONAL ACTIVITIES.

Hewlett Foundation: \$1,000,000

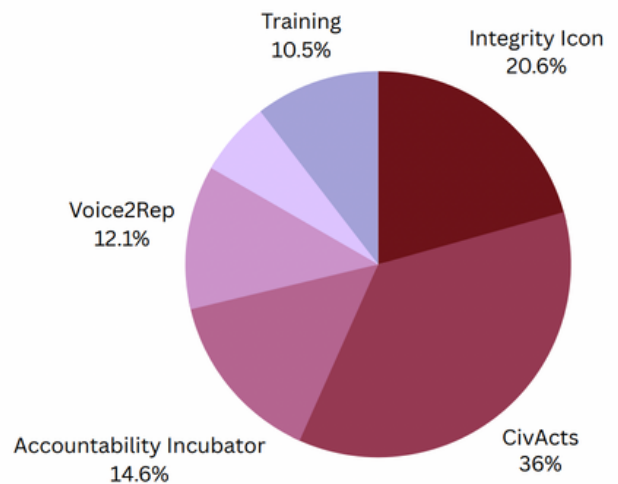
U.S. Department of State, Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement: \$538,413

USAID: \$385,000

Funding By Country



Funding By Program



WHAT WE DO INTERNALLY

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 we strive to make training a high priority at all levels of the organization. We consider ourselves a people-based organization and spend time trying to understand what our employees need through our annual staff survey through which staff have the opportunity to provide feedback; express their needs anonymously; or request a meeting with their supervisors or AL Global Directors. We work to generate access to opportunities for staff across contexts; invest in training and skills-development for team members; and put in place careful succession plans to ensure continuity of knowledge, networks and programming across our Network Labs.

That being said, there is a great deal of professional growth embedded in the work itself, requiring staff members to stretch their capacity by asking them to take on new activities and projects with the guidance of senior staff members. We make deliberate efforts to invest in staff development by forwarding courses, webinars, conferences, events, and opportunities to serve on working groups throughout the entire organization. We have a junior council that convenes regularly to provide professional growth opportunities, peer-to-peer collaboration across countries, and to create a feedback loop between junior and senior-level staff members.

Throughout our Network Labs, our Country Directors work to provide employees with ample opportunities for personal growth and development. AL Pakistan provides a stipend of U.S. \$200 for all employees, regardless of position or level within the organization; pool resources for shared books that are kept at the Hub; and have created a shared drive that the entire team updates with reading materials, articles and resources. In Nepal, the team makes a deliberate effort to offer leadership opportunities to all staff members regardless of level or position. In Nigeria, employees are offered the opportunity to complete two certifications of their choice. The Mexico team is working on a specific fund for computer and technology training and development. The team in Liberia focuses on peer-to-peer learning.

FUTURE ACTIONS

- Network Labs review key performance indicators annually for each staff member;
- Increase Network Labs' budget for staff development funds in their proposals, where possible and feasible.

PROVIDE EVIDENCE THAT RECRUITMENT AND EMPLOYMENT IS FAIR AND TRANSPARENT.

Internally, we bring people into our teams who have very different backgrounds and lived realities of accountability. We aim to model the unlikely networks and live the values we hope to build. Every position is advertised through job sites, on the AL blog page, social media, NGO platforms, and newsletters. We have a rigorous and transparent hiring process and all applicants, interviews, and written materials are documented.

At the country level, hiring processes differ among teams, however, we are moving globally to standardized processes that are open and transparent. In Zimbabwe, the team abides by USAID rules and regulations stating that employment opportunities must be fair and open. The team has incorporated these rules into their human resources policies as well. In South Africa, the team uses the AL Global recruitment guidelines and localizes the technical guidelines to South Africa. In Pakistan, the team has worked to develop a diligent system of documenting the hiring and onboarding process, and has developed thorough interview questions that are specific to each position.

HOW DOES YOUR ORGANIZATION ENSURE A SAFE WORKING ENVIRONMENT FOR EVERYBODY, INCLUDING ONE FREE OF SEXUAL HARRASSMENT, ABUSE, EXPLOITATION, OR ANY OTHER UNACCEPTABLE CONDUCT? WHAT INDICATORS DEMONSTRATE YOUR PROGRESS?

We understand that our work can be challenging. Therefore, we are working to intentionally center the well-being of our team members in every possible way (read more about our [duty of care here](#), safety and security fund [here](#) and inclusion policies [here](#)). We're also working to improve our talent management to identify and retain the very best people; and to put in place capacity development plans that build or bring in the knowledge we need to achieve our strategic goals.

At the country level, our teams in Mexico, South Africa, and Nepal have adopted AL Global duty of care and safeguarding policies. AL Nigeria has created their own policies and appointed a lead for harassment and safeguard management. In Pakistan, the team has created a female-only space to account for cultural aspects. In Liberia, the leadership team has created a "Staff of the Month" award to both recognize and incentivize work ethic in line with our organizational values. AL Zimbabwe makes a deliberate effort to create a culture where team members feel safe to share feedback without fear of retaliation.

FUTURE ACTIONS

- Streamline and centralize safeguarding, duty of care, and inclusion policies across AL Network Labs where culturally relevant and appropriate;
- Country teams to adapt HR policies to be in line with national laws, prioritizing whichever is more rigorous;
- Country teams will conduct annual training sessions on HR policies for all staff.

HOW DO YOU ACQUIRE RESOURCES IN LINE WITH YOUR VALUES AND GLOBALLY ACCEPTED STANDARDS AND WITHOUT COMPROMISING YOUR INDEPENDENCE?

When choosing which donors and partners to work with, Accountability Lab takes into consideration the organization's mission, values, credibility, and contextual knowledge, focusing on grants that fund work on anti-corruption, good governance, and citizen participation. While we are grateful to work with a number of organizations that share our vision and mission, we are also able to recognize the paradox of funding structures in the international development community. Teams apply caution when choosing whom to work with and how, especially when it comes to acquiring resources, in order to ensure their values and independence are not compromised. In South Africa, the team poses the question, "where does this money come from and what does it mean to take it?" when applying for grants or agreeing to partnerships. Universally, AL Global and our Network Labs allocate 60 percent or more of their total resources to direct costs for programming.

FUTURE ACTIONS

- Share global process and policy which sets clear guidance on acquiring resources

HOW DO YOU MONITOR PROGRESS AGAINST STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES? HAVE YOU RE-ALLOCATED RESOURCES TO OPTIMIZE IMPACT?

Accountability Lab made important progress in 2021, despite the challenges. Highlights included the growth of campaigns; growth of our training for civil servants and civic activists; and support for key policy reforms in Nigeria and Nepal. On operational objectives, we added three new programs and learning managers at the Global level to help us synthesize data and share lessons across network Labs, standardized HR policies and procedures across all Labs, developed standardized mechanisms for promotions and raises, and put transition plans in place for all senior management positions.

In terms of learning, we made significant progress towards the creation of a centralized data management systems across teams to ensure more effective synthesis. We also concluded an [evaluation of our Voice2Rep program](#) across Liberia, Nigeria and Zimbabwe using a Most Significant Change (MSC) approach, trained key learning staff on data collection and evaluation methods along the way, and improved programmatic indicators and organizational KPIs to better assess impact and progress.

At the country level, AL Nigeria has organized their own system of KPI's to measure progress. In Zimbabwe, the team uses monitoring and evaluation to re-evaluate the performance of programs and reallocate budget lines as appropriate. At AL Global, we undertake an evaluation of progress against our strategic goals annually to understand how to shift our resources, manage our expectations, and redefine our objectives for the next year. The assessment and redefinition of objectives is published in a yearly strategy update.

FUTURE ACTIONS

- Compile key learning outputs related to our music campaigns and our efforts to shift social norms along with a learning report about our efforts in 2021;
- Carry out an external evaluation of our work;
- Build out an evidence map of key gaps in our approaches.

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?

Across AL Global and our Network Labs, teams reconcile expenses on a monthly basis and conduct an annual audit. We 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.

At the country level, AL Nepal has a rigorous auditing process and holds a weekly financial management meeting. The entire program team works to manage accounts, so there are embedded checks and balances. In South Africa, the team has initiated a co-signing process, so two team members are responsible for signing any paperwork related to finances. In Mali, the team has an administrative and accounting manual that incorporates processes guided by statutory law and allow for board supervision. The manual was updated in 2021 to operate in accordance with new government regulations requiring financial audits by an external and independent firm or approved auditor. AL Nigeria minimizes corruption risks by standardizing the process for selecting auditors and seeking board approval for final selection.

In Pakistan this year, a camera was stolen by a temporary staff member. While AL Pakistan does not make a regular practice of loaning equipment to temporary staff members, the incident highlighted the need for policies around loss or theft of company property.

FUTURE ACTIONS

- Share best practices to prevent corruption, bribery, and misuse of funds across Network Labs
- Develop shared culture, values, and policies for incidents of misuse

WHAT IS YOUR GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE AND WHAT POLICIES/PRACTICES GUIDES REPLACING AND RECRUITING NEW TRUSTEES/BOARD MEMBERS?

AL places a particular emphasis on internal accountability. For this reason each Lab has its own Board of Directors. Potential AL Global board members are assessed through a skills matrix with an emphasis on gender, racial, and geographic diversity. Preferred candidates are asked to provide a comprehensive CV and motivation letter, and are interviewed by the Executive Director, Chair of the Governance Committee, and Board Chair. Appointments must be unanimous. AL Global board members serve a 2 year term that is renewable twice.

In Niger, the board is assembled according to statutory provisions. AL Niger has worked to create a board of directors that represents the cultural and social diversity of the country by including Hausa, Zarma and Peulh and Sonraï groups from 3 different regions of the country and appointing a woman as Chair. AL Nigeria has structured the board to include three committees on the board: governance, finance, and fundraising. AL Zimbabwe has a dual accountability structure with the country director reporting to both the Board of Directors and AL Global.

FUTURE ACTIONS

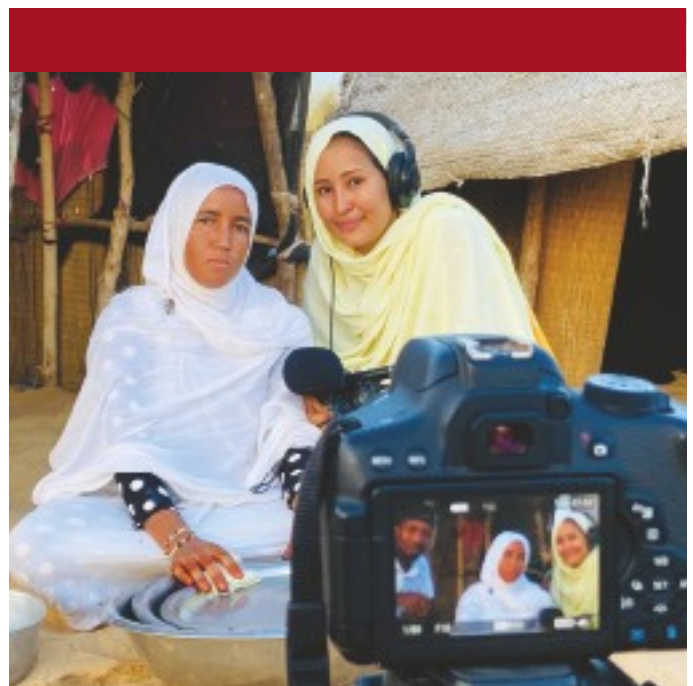
- Support Network Labs with quarterly meetings around board information and governance
- Support Network Labs in creating diverse and inclusive boards across social demographics and skill sets
- Support learning across Lab Boards of Directors through monthly "Open Board Calls"

HOW DOES YOUR BOARD OVERSEE THE ADHERENCE TO POLICIES, RESOURCE ALLOCATION, POTENTIAL RISKS, AND PROCESSES FOR COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES?

The level of oversight from the Board of Directors varies across Network Labs 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 people. 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 initiate quarterly board meetings;
- Create a board governance committee for each Network Lab that oversees adherence to organizational policies and national laws;
- Create a board finance committee for each Network Lab that oversees the organization's resource allocation and management.



WHAT PROCESSES AND MECHANISMS DO YOU HAVE IN PLACE TO HANDLE EXTERNAL COMPLAINTS, INCLUDING THOSE RELATED 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.

These processes and mechanisms vary across countries but as a general approach, AL takes any kinds of complaints extremely seriously. In Nigeria, the process for handling complaints is outlined in the staff handbook: complaints are handled by the Board Chair and discussed with the governance committee. In Liberia, complaints are handled based on which level of the structure complaints occur: programmatic complaints are handled by the Country Director, staff conduct complaints are handled by direct supervisors, supervisor complaints are handled by the Country Director, and senior leadership complaints are handled by the Board of Directors. AL Global has a whistleblowing policy that is shared with country teams and available on the website. [The policy](#) directs all complaints to the AL Global Executive Director who is required to take all complaints seriously and investigate accordingly.

FUTURE ACTIONS

Increase distribution of and training on whistleblower policies and procedures

Consider adding a complaint or whistleblower section to the 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 Global can also serve as a mediator between staff where complaints are not solved on the country level.

FUTURE ACTIONS

- Evaluate HR policies in each country and support Country Directors in the process of maintaining a safe and independent mechanisms to file complaints.

HOW DO YOU MAKE DECISIONS ABOUT THE NEED FOR CONFIDENTIALITY AND PROTECTING THE ANONYMITY OF THOSE INVOLVED?

When a complaint has reached the Executive Director or the senior staff level, the complaints policy mandates discretion and assurance of anonymity if requested. Reprisals are not tolerated in any form at the Lab.

FUTURE ACTIONS

- Reiterate to Network Lab teams mechanisms for complaint registry;
- Develop company-wide annual training for ethics and whistleblowing.

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 at our annual retreat in Doha in May of 2019. The commitment was supported by the AL Global Board of Directors. The process for undertaking this report includes: a 2 hour recorded meeting between the Country Director of each Network Lab, a member of the local Board of Directors, and a member of the Global Board of Directors. This recording is then transcribed and amalgamated into a report and signed off on by the AL Global Board of Directors before sending it to Accountable Now.

Beyond Accountable Now, AL has an annual board self-assessment form which the board develops priorities for the coming year. On the country level, AL Nepal, for example, has developed a Board Matrix to evaluate both expertise and interest in engaging on good governance topics. AL Nigeria develops one-on-one relationships with board members and keeps them updated with regular newsletters and emails.

The Board reviews annual organizational KPIs and strategic goals and reviews progress against these on a quarterly basis.

FUTURE ACTIONS

- Facilitate Accountable Now reporting across all Network Labs on an annual basis;
- Encourage Network Labs to adopt the AL Global board assessment process.

WHAT STEPS HAVE YOU TAKEN TO ENSURE STAFF ARE INCLUDED IN DISCUSSING PROGRESS TOWARD COMMITMENTS TO ORGANIZATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY?

Our Network Lab Country Directors sign a collaboration agreement which is revised on an annual basis for the first three years, then every two years going forward. Network Labs' commitments to accountability are highlighted in the agreement along with their participation in the Accountable Now process as a means of measuring their accountability.

Beyond Accountable Now, in Nepal, the entire team is included in board meetings and budget decisions. AL Mexico holds weekly meetings and has trained the team on the Objectives and Key Results (OKR) Methodology to incorporate qualitative and quantitative measures. They have also developed a horizontal company structure allowing everyone to learn across key organizational areas of responsibility. AL Zimbabwe, among other teams, also hold weekly all staff meetings, weekly leadership meetings, and one-on-one meetings between junior and senior-level staff members.

WHAT IS YOUR ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT'S 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?

AL's Accountable Now report covers the entire organization, incorporating initiatives at the global level with programs in our Network Labs. The Accountable Now reporting process is written into the AL Collaboration Agreement with Network Labs.



www.accountabilitylab.org