

2022 Accountable Now Core Report

[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.

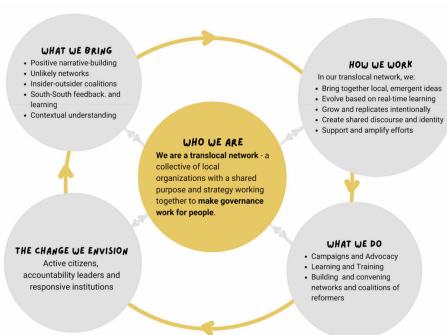
We consider ourselves a [translocal network](#) that finds ways to break down big ideas- like accountability- into more approachable challenges. We seek to understand how local efforts to problem solve are essential, instructive, and scalable, which allows us to see how small fixes can actually shift accountability dynamics over time. 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 2022, 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 the [United States](#) and Sri Lanka, and led Accountability Incubators in Kenya and Uganda. Our network of local Labs work together to achieve the Lab’s mission.

We are very proud that our 2021 Accountable Now Report received positive feedback from the independent review panel. We took up the panel’s suggestion to focus the 2022 action report on these specific areas: internal and external complaint mechanisms have been instituted and we have levelled job descriptions.

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

Our Theory of Action has evolved over the course of the past decade. As a general approach, we find it important to pause and reflect on our mission, vision, and programs as often as possible, and recalibrate where necessary. This not only helps us understand whether we are still doing valuable work, it also mitigates mission creep and aids us in prioritizing how we allocate our resources. For the 2023-2026 period, we are focusing on ensuring that our programs collectively come together to shift accountability systems.

What are your most significant achievements and impacts from 2022?

In 2022, Accountability Lab remained focused on our three core areas of work:

- i) ***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](#);
- ii) ***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](#);
- i) ***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](#).

We also entered into new areas of work - forming new partnerships and catalyzing innovative new programs. At the global level, this meant an exciting partnership with the [Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement](#) at the U.S. Department of State to launch a pilot program called [HackCorruption](#) - a tech4good event designed to facilitate the co-creation of tools to combat, prevent, and deter corruption through emerging technologies. We launched our first regional event in July in Johannesburg, South Africa, where we gathered 50 in-person and 50 virtual participants from Kenya, Namibia, Zambia, Lesotho, Botswana, and South Africa. Throughout 2022, we have continued to support the winning teams to build social enterprises and see their ideas through the implementation phase.

AL Global also formed a dynamic partnership with the U.S. Embassy and the [Love Foundation](#) in Belmopan to bring our signature programs - the Accountability Incubator and Integrity Innovation Lab to Belize for the first time ever. Additionally, with the support of the Bureau of Democracy, Rights, and Labor at the U.S. Department of State, and in partnership with AL Nepal and [Manshur Jono Foundation](#), we started a new program to cultivate an informed civil society and support youth, journalists, CSOs, women, LGBTQI+ persons, religious minorities, and activists to operate without threat of censorship, harassment, and violence in Nepal and Bangladesh. AL Global also continued our work with the [C20, TAP Network](#), and a key convener for civil society for the [Summit for Democracy](#).

One important internal achievement in 2022 was the release of our [2023-2026 Strategy](#). This strategy builds on our [2017-2020](#) and [2020-2023](#) strategies. It is the result of a year-long strategy development process which involved seven core steps: i) management review of the 2020-2023 strategy; ii) an [external organizational review](#), carried out by [The Better Org](#); iii) a strategic retreat with the senior management team and Country Directors in Zimbabwe in June 2022; iv) ongoing feedback and ideas from peers and stakeholders in our work; v) a period for public comment and feedback on the strategic draft in September/October 2022; vi) country-level feedback and orientation with our Labs; and vii) finalization and approval of the Lab's Board of Directors across all Accountability Labs in November and December 2022. We have used this process as a way to collectively renew our commitment to our values; build a shared vocabulary and language for our work; and to ensure a collective understanding of who we are and where we are going as an organization. We see this strategy as a living document that we will update and adapt over time as we grow and improve.

At the country level, Integrity Icon saw innovative programming growth in 2022. AL Nepal created the Integrity Icon alumni network, a platform for support, co-creation, and collaboration for past Icons,

which meets regularly to discuss societal shifts for greater accountability. Similarly, AL South Africa held their first “Meet the Icons” event to connect 2020, 2021, and 2022 Integrity Icons for conversations about integrity in public service. AL Mexico continued to innovate around sustainability and women’s editions of Integrity Icon. In Nigeria, procurement specialist and Integrity Icon, [Charles Enuma](#), has been working to replicate the Integrity Icon model within the Bayelsa State Government by rewarding and incentivizing hardworking, honest, and dedicated civil servants.

We continued our work to support changemakers through the Accountability Incubator, with successful cohorts in Nepal, Pakistan, Nigeria, South Africa, Mali, Zimbabwe, Uganda, and Kenya. In Pakistan, Accountapreneur Wardah [Noor](#)’s initiative [KhudKaar](#) won the Spark Fund Grants competition hosted by the Global Fund for Children, receiving \$10,000 in funding and support to execute the digital literacy program in Layyah. In Zimbabwe, Accountapreneur [Courteney Mukoy](#) developed the civic engagement app [Vote Bot](#) to increase voter registration among young people, as another of many inspiring examples. By collaborating with fellow Accountapreneur, Decent Dube, he was able to reach over 15,000 people in 6 months and register more than 700 people as voters.

We ran successful [Voice2Rep](#) campaigns in Liberia, Mexico, Zimbabwe, and Nigeria. AL Liberia held two Democracy Concerts, reaching more than 200,000 people. AL Zimbabwe’s Voice2Rep album, *Power*, was released on April 18th - Zimbabwe’s Independence Day. Through the Voice2Rep program, AL Mexico highlighted the injustices and human rights abuses experienced by women imprisoned in Mexico. Mexican-Cuban artist and sociologist, Leiden, composed nine original songs in collaboration with women from different penitentiary centers. ["Volver al Corazón"](#) showcases the power of music, art, and social responsibility and empowers marginalized members of society to shape their own narratives.

We continued to build our work on the Gov-HER-nance program in Nepal and Nigeria. AL Nepal launched an inclusion fellowship to train women on data collection to analyze the impact of climate change on women and paired the inclusion fellows with film fellows to create visual storytelling of these impacts. The program culminated in a convening of the [inclusion fellows](#) from Pokhara Metropolitan City with government officials to advocate for urgent climate action. In Nigeria, the team worked across six communities in Plateau state to better understand the challenges that prevent women from participating in civic decision making processes. The team reached more than 900,000 participants and increased the awareness of five local policymakers to address gender inequality and promote inclusive governance.

How have your stakeholders validated your achievements and impacts?

When it comes to our strategy, programs, and approach to learning, AL has received positive feedback from donors, partners, beneficiaries, and Network Lab teams for our emphasis on working at grassroots level to funnel ideas upwards; creating positive feedback loops between citizens and government; our focus on creativity; our fresh, positive, and innovative values; our ability to remain agile in decision-making and operations; and our focus on youth.

Our efforts have been globally recognised and we are often invited to share our thoughts including in 2022 through the [Open Government Partnership](#) in the co-creation of goals related to government accountability; the [C20 Anti-Corruption Working Group](#) - as a way to channel civil society voices into high-level decision-making at the [G20](#); and the [World Economic Forum](#) as a means to influence private sector efforts around anti-corruption. In 2022, we continued our work with the [Transparency, Accountability, and Participation \(TAP\) Network](#) - a network of civil society organizations working

together to advance SDG 16 - as [co-chair of the Steering Committee](#) and as the primary convener for Civil Society for the [Summit for Democracy](#).

In 2022, we received feedback from our HackCorruption participants that validated our envisioned outcomes and impact for the program. This included 97% of respondents reporting that they expanded their networks and 90% reporting that they were likely to collaborate in the future. After the boot camp event, 93% of participants believed they were likely to succeed in building a tool that can be used to prevent and deter corruption and 100% said they strengthened their network and team cohesion. We also had an opportunity to speak with the participants, many of whom say the program changed the way they view corruption and how they see their role in pushing back against it.

We also received acknowledgment for our achievements from USAID Administrator Samantha Power, at the International Anti-Corruption Conference (IACC) in December of 2022, where she mentioned our core program, Integrity Icon in her keynote speech. AL Mali Country Director Doussouba Konate was also invited to speak on a panel moderated by former President Barack Obama at the [Democracy Forum](#) in New York. In December of 2022, AL Nigeria Country Director, Odeh Friday was invited to speak on panels at the IACC as well as at the African Leaders Summit.

How has your organization learned from reported incidents, complaints, and grievances in the past year?

AL takes any kind of complaint extremely seriously. Because of our translocal structure, complaints are handled differently in each country based on agreed-upon policies and procedures. AL Global provides guidance on policies when asked by our Network Labs. However, they remain independent in their decision-making processes. AL Global's whistleblowing policy directs complaints to the AL Executive Director, who is required to investigate accordingly. AL Global can also serve as a mediator between staff where complaints are not solved on the country level.

At the country level, AL South Africa had a few standard internal complaints in 2022, which were addressed through our internal grievance policy. AL Global facilitated a dialogue to resolve the issues, and since then AL South Africa has worked to ensure a safe place culture, where staff members can voice concerns and raise complaints without fear of reprisal. At AL Pakistan, the team conducts anonymous staff surveys twice a year where staff members can give feedback on everything from organizational culture to interpersonal issues. The leadership team will then discuss the feedback and decide the best approaches to address issues and complaints.

Given the feedback we received from the review panel, we've taken the time to review Accountable Now's guidelines on online complaint mechanisms and have begun the process of evaluating our internal and external mechanisms for handling complaints.

Internally, how has your organization worked towards a culture that promotes the values of dynamic accountability?

At AL, we center adaptive learning in everything we do. For us, this means holding regular team learning sessions after programs and incorporating feedback from every employee across the AL translocal network for our 2023-2026 strategy. 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.

On an organizational level, we are working towards becoming the leading ecosystem-building organization in the field of accountability. This means that we are actively convening, coaching, mentoring, and developing the next generation of accountability thinkers and practitioners. Our aim is to ensure that everyone in the accountability space has in some way been positively impacted by our work. We are in a position in which our programs 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.

Externally, how has your organization worked towards embedding dynamic accountability values?

At Accountability Lab, we aim to model our core values of integrity, innovation, humility, practicality, and collaboration both internally and externally. 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. On a programmatic level, we distribute post-program surveys after all of our programs, to ensure participants are creating and retaining value and to help us reiterate program curriculum.

During the second quarter of 2022, Accountability Lab engaged [The Better Org](#) to conduct an [organizational assessment](#) of our work over the past ten years. The objective was to assess the Lab's strategic positioning within the accountability field and interrogate the impact of our programming in the 11 targeted countries to which we have expanded. The report noted that Accountability Lab is viewed in a very positive light by staff, board, partners, funders, and programme participants. Our outputs are viewed as impactful and effective for programme participants at a personal level, in terms of how networks and communities are created, and in terms of creating subtle shifts in behavior and policy at an organizational and community level.

The review also assessed how to build sustainably on our existing strengths in order to generate more value for current and future program participants. The results of the assessment solidified the Lab's uniquely positive approach in the field and also presented a few challenges around how to purposefully expand our programming and impact, which we took into consideration when developing our 2023-2026 strategy.

The strategy design process also included a strategic retreat, at which we discussed, with our Country Directors, the Lab's strengths and how to best position ourselves for maximum impact. Information from our Country Directors and from the external review informed our decision to work on the following strategic themes from 2023-2026: inclusion of young people, people with disabilities, and other groups that are generally excluded from decision-making processes; strengthening inclusive governance of natural resources, climate adaptation and resilience programs, and a just and equitable transition to clean energy; digital governance, including leveraging [technology](#) to enhance good governance, disinformation, digital rights and data protection/privacy, and digital surveillance; and civic participation—specifically strengthening civic participation in democratic processes, including advocating for regular, free and fair elections as an essential indicator of accountable governance.

