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

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

What we bring
- Positive narrative-building
- "Unlikely networks"
- "Insider-outsider" coalitions
- South-South feedback and learning

What we do
- Campaigns
- Learning & training
- Collaborative spaces
- Networks and coalitions
- Convening and advocacy

The change we make
- Collective action for systems change
- Shifting norms and changing behavior
- Influence policies, processes & practice

Active Citizens
Responsible Leaders
Accountable Institutions

2020
THEORY OF CHANGE

ASSUMPTIONS
- All communities & voices are equal
- Individuals have the ability to change institutions and systems
- Our team lives by its values

PRE-CONDITIONS
- Need for accountability exists
- Political/civic space to operate
- Communities willing to participate
- Partnerships to facilitate change

OUTPUTS
- CAMPAIGNS
- COLLABORATION HUBS
- INCUBATORS & TRAINING
- FEEDBACK MECHANISMS
- MULTI-STAKEHOLDER INITIATIVES
- POLICY CHANGE

LONG-TERM OUTCOMES
- INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES
- KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS
- COMMUNITIES FOR CHANGE
- COALITION BUILDING

ACTIVE, ENGAGED CITIZENS & RESPONSIBLE LEADERS

MORE INCLUSIVE & ACCOUNTABLE SOCIETIES

CROSS CUTTING THEMES: ADAPTIVE LEARNING | GENDER EQUITY | SUSTAINED ENGAGEMENT

2019
THEORY OF CHANGE

The Problem

Our Solution

Short-Term Impact

Long-Term Impact

Poverty, inequality and violence because power-holders are not accountable to citizens

Mentoring, networks, management, advocacy, and seed funding for “accountpreneurs” with great ideas for integrity

Citizens and power-holders are more aware of their rights and responsibilities and actively work together to build accountability

Collaborative movement for change; governments and other power-holders respond to citizens’ needs and use resources more responsibly

Improved lives for citizens

CONTINUAL LEARNING AND ADAPTATION TO IMPROVE
Poverty, inequality and violence around the world because people with power are not accountable to citizens

Community and knowledge building through events, trainings, outreach and cross-country lesson-sharing

National and international advocacy and policy change through campaigns, working groups and high-level advice

Mentoring, networks, management support and seed funding for ‘accountapreneurs’ with great ideas for change

Citizens and power holders more aware of their rights and responsibilities and are more active in building accountability

Greater global support for accountability; other organizations are inspired to develop creative, citizen-led accountability initiatives

Collaborative movement for change; governments and other power-holders respond to citizens’ needs and use resources more responsibly

Improved lives for citizens
ACCOUNTABILITY LAB
THEORY OF CHANGE

ACCOUNTABILITY OF POWER-HOLDERS

IMPROVED LIVES FOR CITIZENS & INCREASED EXPECTATIONS OF ACCOUNTABILITY

MORE EFFICIENT USE OF PUBLIC & PRIVATE RESOURCES

RESPONSIBLE DECISIONS & ACTIONS

2012-2013