accountabilitylab
LIBERIA

We are reimagining how to build accountability in Liberia. Our vision is a world in which citizens are active, leaders are responsible and institutions are accountable. It is a world in which resources are used wisely, youth are taking leadership responsibly, decisions benefit everyone fairly, and people lead secure lives. Our mission is therefore to make governance work for people through supporting active citizens, responsible leaders and accountable institutions.

2019 ANNUAL REPORT

This was a busy year for Accountability Lab Liberia as we continued to celebrate honest civil servants; grew our unlikely networks of change-makers; used film to advocate for change; engage citizens in feedback processes in their communities; worked to build trust around justice issues; and built iCampus- our co-working space- into the leading innovation space in Liberia. In total we reached millions of people in Liberia, across all 15 counties, and engaged the government on accountability issues at all levels. This report outlines how we have broadened our impact and extended our reach within the past year.

accountabilitylab campaigns

Shifting norms to ensure that integrity becomes the expected behavior within societies.

accountabilitylab communities

Influencing policies, processes and practices through growing coalitions and advocating for change.

accountabilitylab knowledge

Equipping reformers - inside and outside government - with the knowledge and tools to push for better governance.

INTEGRITY ICON

Integrity Icon Liberia is a campaign to recognize, celebrate and support honest government officials by "naming and faming" them publicly. In Liberia, we crowned the Integrity Icons in front of a crowd that included VIPs, previous Icons, the media, volunteers and the general public. The 5 winners were: Musu M. Mulbah, Focal Person on Sexual & Gender Based Violence at CB Dunbar Hospital Bong County; Ord-Siejepo Jlateh, Assistant Commissioner for Budget and Finance, Liberia Revenue Authority (LRA); Samuel G. Ford, Assistant Commissioner of Police for Community Services; Oretha M. Thomas, Office Attendant to the Minister of Gender, Children and Social Protection; and Henry H. Sele, Project Accountant, Ministry of Agriculture.

We have been working hard to support the Icons to grow their networks, develop their skills and push for collective reforms within their agencies. For example, our Icon Musu was asked to facilitate a national training of her colleagues on maintaining integrity in the health sector and to explain how she achieved the integrity Icon 2019 award. We also hosted a series of "Meet the Icons" event at universities, where students interested in joining the civil service could engage with these exemplary reformers.

2019 INTEGRITY ICON BY NUMBERS

207	**3,168**	**10**	**10,000**
Nominations	Votes	Volunteers	Social Media Reach

EVALUATING THE CAMPAIGN

In 2019 we sought to measure the impact of the Integrity Icon Liberia campaign through a Contribution Tracing study aimed at surfacing whether the campaign has further enabled Icons to implement new/improved rules, practices, or processes for good governance in their workplace. Tracing 3 Integrity Icons - Bockarie Sakhila, Rebecca Scotland and Alphonso Rancy - our study revealed that participation in the campaign led to:

- Icons experiencing a heightened sense of motivation for their work;
- Icons were driven to strengthen accountability practices and integrity in their agencies;
- Increased recognition as individuals of integrity by peers and power holders in their sector, as well as access to new external actors; and
- Changes related to good governance in their agencies that could be attributed to the Icon.

Read more about the study here.

COMMUNITY JUSTICE TEAMS

Accountability Lab (with the Citizens Bureau, an organization that has grown through our incubator) has been engaging community leaders and members through a grassroots strategy for local justice. The aim is to help community dwellers resolve civil cases which otherwise are taken into the formal justice system where they are slow, expensive and corrupt. We work with the police and the courts to provide residents a more affordable, local, and trustworthy system for justice. This includes:

- Partnerships- within communities (mediators) CSO partners (Citizens Bureau) and the formal justice systems (police and courts);
- Capacity Building- for mediators to build the skills and tools needed for successful mediation activities.
- Collection and Dissemination of Information- through surveys and discussions of the findings at townhall meetings to generate consensus on ways forward.

CJT BY NUMBERS IN 2019

85%
Cases solved

592
Community members Involved

834
days of time saved

$87,570
in legal fees saved by communities

IMPACT

- 278 cases solved out of 328 cases registered at the four mediation centers in three counties;
- By that percentage of cases solved, the project saved $87,570 USD in time, money, and energy for those involved with the disputes. This is an estimate of the legal fees, bribes and the average daily rate of time invested for those involved;
- 29 cases recommended through collaborative efforts working with the formal justice systems, local courts and police;
- 72.1% of 3,280 community members agreed or strongly agreed that the meditation centers were helpful in creating peace in their communities.

REEL PEACE

The Reel Peace project- with support from the UN Peacebuilding Fund- is building a national network of women that is pushing for accountability and peace related to gender issues. The project trained 1st time female film-makers from across the country to develop skills and make films about critical gender issues, ranging from gender-based violence to justice issues. The films were disseminated across Liberia and were shown at a large national film festival in Monrovia- with a total reach of tens of thousands of citizens. We also worked with power-holders in communities and in government, using the films as powerful advocacy tools.

PROCESS

- Capacity Development- participants across all 15 counties received technical training in film-making skills (story-telling, film production, editing and dissemination).
- Advocacy- the participants showed the films in their communities and at a large national festival, generating hundreds of conversations about issues of gender, peace and accountability.
- Networking and sustainability- we brought the women together to share ideas, support each other and push for collective change in their communities. After the project they will continue to collaborate and develop joint visual storytelling projects around issues of social and political change.

IMPACT IN 2019

- Trained 45 women in film production, editing and advocacy skills;
- Produced 15 films/short documentaries on critical issues affecting women;
- Created a dedicated website as a repository for all the films, and with the information/activities of the women filmmakers;
- Created a network of women filmmakers that provided peer-to-peer coaching and mentorship support;
- Engaged 10,000+ people across Liberia in discussions around gender equity and accountability for women's rights.

78%

of participants indicated an increase in their understanding of advocacy and peacebuilding.

"
I have learned from the Reel Peace project how to use the computer and camera, especially to do recordings. I'm going to continue practicing these skills that we were taught. I will try connecting with other organizations like this (Accountability Lab), because this what I'm passionate about

Venessa Seckie (Participant)

ICAMPUS

There are few active, managed spaces anywhere in Liberia where youth can come together to collaborate, innovate, access high-speed internet and develop shared ideas to solve collective challenges. It is essential that young citizens have the skills, tools and communities they need to leverage change and build the Liberia they would like to live in going forwards.

iCampus acts as a physical and virtual space for learning and training; a networking and innovation hub; and a focal point for work on advocacy, governance and innovation.

Accountability Lab Liberia co-leads iCampus with iLab Liberia; and iCampus is also the local Liberian affiliate of the OpenGov Hub community- a group of spaces across the world that support collective work on open governance issues.

ICAMPUS 2019 HIGHLIGHTS BY NUMBERS

54	**28**	**3**	**5,000+**
Trainings	Workshops	Tech Hackathons	Participants in events

HIGHLIGHTS

- Further development of our 4,000 square feet campus in the center of Monrovia, with dedicated office spaces, events spaces, the fastest wifi in Monrovia and a vibrant community of young hange-makers;
- In 2019 we hosted a number of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), and numerous network-building events;
- We hosted 8 Fail Faires (to celebrate failure as a learning process), 8 learning calls, 2 learning conferences, 12 cross-CSO mentorship sessions, 8 customized tech learning tools, and 5 learning research projects;
- We further developed a New Media Lab - a multipurpose recording and production studio that engages film-makers, musicians and creatives. In 2019, the NML developed creative campaigns that have supported advocacy and accountability around Natural Resource Management (NRM) and education issues using both music and film;
- We began the development of an Inclusion Cafe on the iCampus compound- Liberia's 1st cafe run by people with disabilities, through which we will push for accountability through diversity.

ACCOUNTABILITY INCUBATOR

The Accountability Incubator is a flagship program of Accountability Lab, through which we support young civil society leaders to build sustainable, effective tools for accountability, participation and social impact in their societies. Since 2014, selected Liberian 'accountapreneurs' have undergone an accelerated one-year program that includes hands-on, comprehensive support for their ideas and initiatives. The Incubator provides mentorship, fundraising and management guidance, and access to a global network of leading institutions, foundations and donors. The overall objective of the Incubator is to support individuals to strengthen accountability and support better governance in Liberia at a local and/or national level. In 2019 the Incubator program enrolled six young Liberians who worked to create various tools and programs to support taxation and fiscal transparency in Liberia.

LOOKING FORWARD

In 2020 we are looking forward to building on this progress and working towards localizing our new 2020-2023 strategy. We hope to do three things in addition:

- Grow our work with music in Liberia and develop our Rap2Rep campaign to include more engagement and network-building with the Hip Co community in Liberia;
- Develop a deeper focus on the Open Government Partnership, which we lead as Co-Chair on behalf of civil society in Liberia, including the finalization of the National Action Plan (NAP);
- Find ways to bolster diversity and inclusion in our work, including through work with new communities and CSOs working with those whose voices are often less heard as part of this kind of work.

SELECTED PROJECTS FROM 2019

- James Koryor developed a project around social accountability & transparency to enhance domestic revenue generation in Liberia. His project focused on strengthening the relationship between citizens and their representatives as well as increasing awareness around Liberia's domestic tax regime.

- Clarence G. Gaye developed a Health Literacy and Health Accountability Project which looked at improving the transparency of health-related information for the public and promoting mutual understanding between the government and public on health issues.

- Abimael B. Arimi developed a program to raise awareness in communities around the CSR responsibilities of mining companies and tracked funding from these companies that was promised to Liberian citizens. He also worked to ensure future funds were designed to support sustainability of the environment.

- Patience Koteah developed a Youth Lead project that supported students to develop understandings of civic engagement, fiscal transparency and policy advocacy issues through awareness, outreach, training and connections to national policy review processes.

- Menue Bainda developed the Open Tax Initiative to improve citizen understanding of tax issues in Liberia and support a more equal tax regime. This included efforts to raise awareness and create conversations about fiscal transparency issues.

> "All of our work is underpinned by a clear focus on learning about accountability- to understand how we can ensure better governance in Liberia. We support Liberians to build the skills, develop the "unlikely networks" and grow the tools they need to push for the change we all want
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> **Lawrence Yealue, Country Director, Accountability Lab Liberia**

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