



CONTENTS

- 3 *Integrity Icon*
- 4 *Accountability Incubator*
- 5 *NED Civic and Voters Education Project*
- 6 *Liberia Election Monitoring*
- 7 *Private Sector and CSOs Coalition Partnership*
- 8 *Advocacy and Policy*
- 9 *Staff Corner*
- 10 *Budget*

LIBERIA ANNUAL REPORT 2023

The most significant highlight of 2023 for the country program was the national elections and the role that Accountability Lab Liberia played in helping Liberians all over the country vote to elect a new set of leaders during the October 10 presidential and legislative elections, and the November 14th presidential run-off election, as stipulated by the constitution.

Before the October 10, 2023 elections, it was widely rumored that the election process would be marred by violence, either due to the ruling party not agreeing to the results if they were defeated or the leading opposition party refusing to accept the results because they were cheated. These waves of fear were rooted in the experience from the 2020 senatorial elections, which saw pockets of violence around the country.

In response, the government of Liberia, through its bi-lateral and regional partners, organized the Farmington River Peace Agreement at the Farmington Hotel in lower Margibi County, Liberia, where leaders from 27 out of 31 political parties signed a declaration designed to ensure a nonviolent electoral process.



The agreement obliges signatories of political parties and their supporters to uphold the principles of peaceful elections and respect for the rule of law. Built on the foundation of the initial pledge signed in 2017, the declaration reinforces progress towards sustainable peace and democracy and a solid commitment to preventing violence, including violence against women, during the electoral process.

Cognizant of our responsibility as a civil society organization to promote sustainable peace and democratic governance, AL Liberia and partners (DAI/USAID and NED) collaborated and implemented the Civic and Voters Education (CVE) activities in and around six vote-rich counties in Liberia; Bong, Grand Bassa, Lofa, Margibi, and Montserrado. The project and activities aimed to promote non-violence alongside educating the Liberian electorate – particularly youth, women, and first-time voters. It aimed to empower voters to make informed decisions and ensure they knew the value of their involvement on political outcomes. This was done by creating and disseminating messaging around democracy and participation through innovative means, including online meetings and mainstream and social media content.

IMPACT BY NUMBERS ACROSS 5 PROJECTS

5,380

participants

804,892

community radio
listeners reached

363,545

social media engagement
and reach

36

meetings & speaking
engagements

Program content
produced and
disseminated

4

hip-co
songs

5

short
videos

5

songs
produced

8

jingles

8

radio
dramas

10

podcasts

30

voxpops

6

cartoon
sketches



INTEGRITY ICON

The 9th edition of the Integrity Icon Liberia campaign was launched on 17 May 2023 in search of honest public servants with the theme: Building Liberia through Integrity: A Search for Honest Public Servants and Climate Heroes/Sheroes. Volunteers visited public workplaces and hosted radio talk shows to help citizens understand the objectives of the project, and how to nominate fellow co-workers. The staff reviewed all submissions using the criteria and narrowed the selection to the 30 best candidates.

NUMBERS OF INTEGRITY ICON

516

nominations

17

volunteers

15

counties

The candidates were evaluated by a three-person judging panel;

1. Attorney Bowoulo T. Kelley: a Human Rights Lawyer, whose work focuses on protecting and promoting the rights of women, children, the elderly, and vulnerable groups in Liberia.
2. Ms. Marpu Yekeku, a 2018 integrity Icon, a registered nurse at Johnsonville Public Clinic, Montserrado County, Ministry of Health Liberia.
3. Mr. G.Ralph Jimmeh Jr, a university lecturer, social activist, motivational speaker, and an advocate of social justice and peace, and head of the Secretariat at the Open Government Partnership in Liberia

Our 2023 winners are:

1. Francis Ziama – Dedicated 17 years to the Liberia National Police, currently serving as the Community Police Officer in Lofa County, Liberia.
2. Victoria Koffa Toe – is an Administrative Assistant at the National Civil Service Agency (CSA) in Buchanan, Grand Bassa County, Liberia,
3. Hannah T. Jansen – is the District Health Officer (DHO) of the Jo-River Health District, Rivercess County, Liberia
4. Luke K. Gbualo – is an Administrative Assistant to the District Education Officer (DHO) in District 1 in Rivercess County, Liberia
5. Moses K. G. Sekowu – a dedicated Mathematics Instructor at Voinjama Multilateral High School and Free Pentecostal University in Lofa County



Some key personalities in attendance at the celebration meeting were Jim Wright, USAID Mission Director; Dr. Miatta J.T. Toe, Liberia's Anti-Corruption Commissioner; Aisha K. Kolubah, UN Women Project Representative; Johnny A. Clarke, Liberian Senate Director/Procurement; Harold M. Aidoo, Integrity Watch Liberia Director; and Ousman L. Kallay, ILab Liberia's Deputy Country Director, among others.



The co-created curriculum

Quarter One

- Civic Engagements: Understanding the Context and Knowing your Customers
- Organization Legal Structure and Compliance
- Lean Start-up Methodology and Design Thinking
- Monitoring and Reporting

Quarter Two

- Accountability and Leadership
- Finance and Operations for Non-profit
- Marketing and Branding
- Introduction to Proposal Writing

Quarter Three

- Partnership and Networking
- Fundraising & Sustainability Planning
- Impact Measurement
- Needs and Right-based Advocacy

Quarter Four

- Partnership and Networking
- Fundraising & Sustainability Planning
- Impact Measurement
- Needs and Right-based Advocacy

ACCOUNTABILITY INCUBATOR

The Accountability Incubator project is a 12-month-long training, coaching, and mentoring designed to strengthen emerging change-makers and smaller organizations, providing them with the knowledge, skills, and tools they need to champion social accountability issues in their communities.

We received thirteen applications, and after a thorough review, screening of applications, and interviews, we selected four individuals/organizations. They were Miatta Kamara, Founder of LIBx Records Foundation; Hanson Blayon, Program Manager at A.M. Kyne Collegiate Resource Center; Ernest K. Browne, founder of ASYLUM Liberia; and Archie Forpoh, founder of Innoignite Liberia.

Their projects included youth and entrepreneurship training, advocating and creating awareness against the harmful practices of drugs and drug addiction, providing awareness around a clean and healthy environment through proper waste disposal, and providing computer literacy to high school students.

The accountapreneurs and the Lab co-created the curriculum to ensure that the set of topics were developed to meet the needs of the participants



I didn't realize that Legal Structure and Compliance was anywhere related to funding/resource mobilization. This was an eye-opener for me and our institution.

- Hanson G. Blyone, 2023 Accountapreneur

IMPACT BY NUMBERS

13

applications

4

participating organizations

4

training sessions

12

mentoring sessions



CVE by the numbers

We reached over a million people through community engagements and media dissemination activities.

In-person engagement: 5,380 people and the combined radio listenership in the communities is estimated to be about 804,892.

The social media engagements on WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook generated a total interaction of 363,545, of which the primary audience is Liberian, distributed as follows:

- 67.9% Male and 32.1% Female.
- Liberia 83.1%, the United States of America 5%, Guinea 1%, Nigeria 1%, Ghana 0.9%, India 0.9%, Sierra Leone 0.5%, Cyprus 0.4%, and the United Arab Emirates 0.4%.
- Age ranging from 18 - 65+, with most followers between the ages of 25 and 34.



NED CIVIC AND VOTERS EDUCATION PROJECT

As part of the community awareness activities on the Civic and Voters Education (CVE) project funded by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), AL Liberia’s field team distributed flyers in some 16 pre-identified communities alongside organized musical jamboree performances held in the project counties; Bong, Grand Bassa, Lofa, Margibi, Montserrado, and Nimba. The venues were mainly communities with crowded street corners/intersections and market areas. The field team drew crowds with comedy and music – in particular popular comedian Future Doe – to set the stage for information sharing and interactive discussions. The program team then introduced the project, and provided key CVE messages related to the election and nonviolence, after which the recorded songs (Changes and No Violence) were performed.

AL Liberia reached over a million people through community engagements and media dissemination activities.

I am happy you took the time to come and speak to us today. We, the youth, particularly motorcyclists, have been perceived to be associated with violence and drugs and even sometimes classified as criminals. But we all want the best for Liberia, and listening to you today makes us feel important. We are challenged to do all we can to contribute meaningfully to keep Liberia safe and peaceful.

- A motorcyclist in Gbarnga, Bong County.



8 indicators for free & fair elections

1. Monitor the opening of polling stations- Checking whether the ballot boxes are empty and properly sealed;
2. Observe how the voters are processed, from the crowd control queuing up to the voting centers
3. Observe the accuracy of the voter rolls/registers
4. Observe whether the voters can vote in secret and free of intimidation;
5. Observe the counting and tallying of the ballots;
6. Observe the handling of spoiled and unused ballots;
7. Checking whether all ballots are accounted for;
8. To check for the presence of security officers and other accredited observers.



LIBERIA ELECTION MONITORING

In September 2023 the National Elections Commission (NEC) accredited AL Liberia to monitor the presidential and legislative elections in Bong, Grand Bassa, Margibi, Montserrado, and Nimba counties.

The Lab developed eight indicators based on international standards. These ensured that the voting processes observed during the elections in the counties not only reflect integrity and accountability but also that they are free, fair, peaceful, and transparent, reflecting the will of the Liberian people.

In all the counties monitored, elections were peaceful. The Lab's CVE activities contributed to the peaceful outcome of the elections and included; street jams, radio talk shows, dramas, podcasts, jingles, and interactive intellectual forums. Unlike the first round, which recorded 114,597(5.8%) invalid ballots from a total of 1,947,780 (99.93%) votes cast, the runoff polls saw a sharp decrease of 25,788 (1.57%) invalid votes of a total of 1,634,183 votes cast across the country. With more intentional interventions around civic engagements, citizens will continue to understand their role in these processes, strengthening our democracy and increasing peaceful civic participation nationwide.

As part of the Lab, I can impact the civic space, especially by supporting public education on civil rights and naming and honoring people of integrity. Through the integrity icon program and the people's stories, we are beginning to know that it is possible to have people with integrity in every government sector—thus, a change in mindset.

– Allanko Wennie- Accountability Lab Liberia's Finance Manager

PRIVATE SECTOR AND CSOS COALITION CONSULTATIVE PARTNERSHIP ENGAGEMENT

AL Liberia conducted a one-day consultative partnership engagement meeting with some private sector actors and CSO coalition members in the health and education sectors to set the stage for collaborative partnerships between the CSOs and the private sector. The 35 participants (11 females, 24 males), included nine representatives from five private sector institutions; Western Cluster Corporation, Orange Liberia, Ecobank Liberia, Petrol Trade, and Abeer Pharmaceuticals. The rest were CSO representatives. The purpose of the meeting was to outline and discuss the importance of CSOs establishing partnerships with the private sector for two key reasons:

1. To raise additional support for program advocacy efforts in the health and education sectors toward sustaining activities in these sectors
2. To build a collaborative network between the CSOs and private sector actors that enhances their business and development agenda.

Private sector participants highlighted areas they could participate in, but also three key issues/challenges that need to be addressed by CSOs to attract and work with the private sector to implement projects successfully;

- Need for better accountability and transparency
- Need for better CSO staffing and overall capacity to improve effectiveness and efficiency
- Need to updated legal documentation

Opportunities Identified by the Private Sector for CSO Engagement

- Orange Liberia encouraged the CSOs present to engage the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) department of their institution for possible opportunities for collaboration and support to the health and education sectors
- Western Cluster Liberia Mining Company- The company's liaison officer encouraged the Coalition CSOs to visit their offices for information on current/available support to the sectors. He also mentioned that through the CSR Fund, their company has helped and continues to help improve the lives of citizens in those sectors.
- Identify your target group: CSOs should identify and prioritize target groups within the health and education sectors to utilize limited resources.
- Understand their needs: CSOs should seek to understand the needs of the private sector groups they want to collaborate with (training, awareness raising, monitoring of community projects).
- Select your activities: CSOs need to identify and select activities that match the needs of the private sector.
- Plan your engagement: CSO should develop a clear business strategy that documents the major objectives, activities, efforts, timeline, etc.
- Engage constructively and speak their language: Private sector and civil society organizations have different languages and cultures. Companies may also sometimes feel threatened by CSOs. Try to learn their language and engage constructively in an excellent line of communication.



ADVOCACY AND POLICY

On 4 April, at the Farmington Hotel in Margibi, Liberia, leaders from 27 of 31 political parties signed the Farmington River Declaration 2023, an enhanced and comprehensive peace declaration designed to ensure a nonviolent and peaceful electoral process in Liberia. Organized by the National Election Commission (NEC), in partnership with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and the United Nations (UN), the peace agreement ceremony was attended by the President then, his excellency George Manneh Weah, who signed as the political leader and standard-bearer on behalf of his party. Representatives from the government, civil society groups, the diplomatic community, and international organizations also witnessed the historic policy-making event.

Using the Farmington River Declaration 2023 as an accountability tool, AL Liberia organized and implemented the Elections and Peace Accountability Summit across Liberia's six most populated counties. The meetings were designed to raise awareness about the peace pledge, explaining the importance of a peaceful election and what it means for sustainable development in the country. It also provided a platform for other civil society organizations to advocate for peace and nonviolence during and after the elections. The summit brought together 50 stakeholders in each county, including civil society representatives, local political party leaders, and leaders in the counties (chiefs, traditional leaders, elders, religious leaders, youth, and women representatives). The discussions under the theme "What can be done to prevent and curb electoral violence in the 2023 general and presidential elections, as well as how to use the Rule of Law in dealing with cases of dispute" were led by a panel of discussants that was recorded and broadcast live. With more than 300 local leaders and civil society actors, the events reached more than 26,000 people interacting directly on social media throughout these advocacy events.



STAFF CORNER

Country Director attends the IVLP Program Organized by the US Embassy State Department

The International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) is one of the USA's most prestigious programs. Candidates are nominated by US embassy staff from around the world. Lawrence was nominated to the 2023 Accountability and Transparency Cohort.

The 3-week program took participants to four cities in three states and exposed participants to accountability and transparency mechanisms at the federal, state, county, and community levels. The activities were eye-openers and provided concrete examples of how a government should work for its people.

Lawrence shared his experience of the program at the US Embassy in Liberia, and was elected President of the IVLP Alumni Association in Liberia and aims to make that body functional.

Program and Learning Director attends Africa Democracy Network Meeting in South Africa

The Charles F. Kettering Foundation organized an inaugural all-Africa network meeting of its fellowship Alumni who are also active practitioners of democracy on the continent. It aims to advance inclusive democracies by fostering citizen engagement, promoting government accountability and countering authoritarianism.

AL Liberia's Program and Learning Director, Nyema, an alumnus of the Foundation's fellowship program, was invited to attend the meeting. Nyema met with colleagues working in communities and civil society organizations throughout the African continent to identify regional democratic challenges and promising initiatives to counter them. The meeting was also an opportunity to learn about collaborative efforts in the African network, to spark new ones, and build on decades of foundation work with African civil society practitioners and organizations.

Nyema also served on a panel that discussed strategies and shared perspectives on civil society and government engagement. This was based on a case study of AL Liberia's work on engaging the private sector and government to improve benefits for mining communities in the country.

STAFF CORNER CONTINUED

AL Liberia's Program Officer Participates in the Regional Training on Citizens Access to Justice

The West Africa Legal Empowerment Network (WALEN) organized a regional network meeting in Kanu State, Nigeria, bringing together grassroots justice organizations to learn, share, and build solidarity. Community-based paralegals, grassroots or frontline justice defenders, and program staff who work to promote access to justice for the underprivileged from Liberia, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Togo, Ghana, Guinea, Democratic Republic of Congo, Congo, Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso and Kenya attended.

The sessions focused on the history of legal empowerment, sharing cross-regional perspectives, similarities, differences, and challenges faced by the power of the law and the power of the people, law and organizing, community building, and developing grassroots leadership. During the sessions, AL Liberia's Program Officer Famatta shared AL Liberia's approach to combating the lack of affordable, accessible, and timely formal justice practice. The Lab's community justice team worked in four densely populated communities using the alternative dispute resolution (ADR) mechanism, a cost-free approach to help citizens reduce extensive bureaucratic impediments in accessing the formal justice system by mediating civil cases and resolving issues in an effective, and sustainable manner, building trust, understanding and contributing to peace and ensuring accountability over time.

Communications Officer participated in the UNODC Regional Dialogue for Africa

AL Liberia's Communications Officer, Parnneh Mallobe, participated in the UNODC Regional Dialogue for Africa in Nairobi, Kenya.

The dialogue was aimed at bringing civil society, academia, and youth together to discuss how civil society organizations can support the implementation of the UNGASS political declaration and UNCAC at national and regional levels, consider the role of youth and youth-led organizations in the implementation of the UNGASS political declaration and UNCAC; share insights and experience on national anti-corruption activities and explore opportunities for collaboration at national and regional levels. It also aimed to foster exchange and cooperation among participants on education and research focusing on anti-corruption, integrity ethics, and to identify gaps and needs related to the above areas and discuss how UNODC can help civil society to address them.

Parnneh delivered a presentation on the role youth play in ensuring that the anti-corruption agenda is achieved.

BUDGET & STAFF

3

total grants

U\$309,099.83

total budget

10

staff

23

volunteers

5,380

tprogram participants