

Accountability Lab is a global translocal network that makes governance work for people by supporting active citizens, responsible leaders and accountable institutions. Our goal is a world in which resources are used wisely, decisions benefit everyone fairly, and people lead secure lives.

Annual Report

MEXICO

2024

Contents

02	OVERVIEW
03	BY THE NUMBERS
04	IN OUR OWN WORDS
06	PROJECT 1: INTEGRITY ICON AND INTEGRITY SUMMIT
07	PROJECT 2: CIVIC ACTION TEAMS (CIVACTS)
08	ADDITIONAL HIGHLIGHTS
08	ADVOCACY AND POLICY
09	FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS
10	THEORY OF ACTION IN PRACTICE

Overview

Impact on governance and anti-corruption

- **The Integrity Summit** highlighted 10 public servants, transforming perceptions of the public sector and inspiring change through integrity.
- **CivActs** addressed the needs of the Yu-guelito community through feedback and community-led action to address systemic gaps in service delivery.

Lessons learned:

- We witnessed the importance of listening and co-creating with communities to achieve sustainable development and long-term impact.
- Public servants not only find value in being recognized for their integrity and their above-and-beyond contributions, but they also have a thirst to connect with each other, to share what they know, to build community, to share best practices and to co-create not only with their peers but with civil society—organized or not. They are eager to spark important conversations around integrity, accountability, and transparency.

By the Numbers



Total number of town halls **3** (CivActs)

Total number of surveys/respondents:

Civacts Program: 255 survey responses were completed

Survey topics:

- Demographic data
- Access, quality, and prioritization of public services
- Community dynamics.
- Optional women's section focused on safety and security perception, sexual and reproductive health services, and care work.
- Findings: Survey responses showed that the community's priority needs are access to running water, addressing violence and lack of safety and security, sanitation, access to economic and educational opportunities through skills development, recreational activities focused on children and youth, health, and regularization of land use and other public services.

Total number of dialogues/conversations

5

workshops
(CivActs)

11

listening, conversation,
feedback, exchange
spaces (CivActs)

Training workshops conducted

2

Co-creative
workshops
with community
leaders

2

Community
Field Agents
(CFAs) Civacts

1

Workshop with
10 community
committee
coordinators

Total participants by program:

Integrity Icon: 10 finalists + 9 people in the jury panels + over 3000 votes + over 70 nominations + over 200 Integrity Summit virtual participants.

CivActs: 2000 community members + 8 community leaders.

- 2000 community members will be impacted by the implementation of the action plan.
- From the 2000 community members, there were 255 survey respondents, 11 CFAs, 10 community committee coordinators, and 600+ Community General Assembly attendees.



In Our Own Words

INSPIRATIONAL QUOTES: (INTEGRITY SUMMIT)

"Seeing the women we defend regain their freedom and rights is the greatest reward I can have".

SUSANA MONTAÑEZ, WINNER IN THE SUSTAINABILITY CAMPAIGN

"This is not just recognition for me but for those who believe that transparency is the path to a better future".

RAÚL PARRA, WINNER IN THE YOUTH CAMPAIGN

INSPIRATIONAL QUOTES: (CIVACTS)

"The collected information and the findings from the surveys clearly reflect what the community feels, thinks, and needs. The action plan recommendations that stemmed from the findings gave us clarity on what we need to prioritize, and they informed our work plan that has already yielded results in the implementation of new community activities and in our negotiations with the government."

YOLANDA CERVANTES, COMMUNITY LEADER

INSPIRATIONAL QUOTES: (CIVACTS)

"I would like this community to look like I once dreamed when I first arrived here: I expected to see a beautiful neighborhood, full of plants and trees, where we all get along, I wanted to see the children playing without worry and full of opportunities ahead of them. I think it is important for all the inhabitants of this community to have the freedom to express ourselves without fear, to have the space and platform to say what we like and what we don't like, and for us to be heard. That is why I decided to join this project. When I first heard about it, it also seemed very interesting to me; it sounded like it would be something good for our community because it was exactly what we needed: an opportunity to express our needs and concerns."

ERISELDA MÉNDEZ, CFA

"I would love to see a safer Yuguelito for the people here to have more opportunities. There are very smart people here who just need an opportunity to be able to thrive. I would love for my community to prosper as it once did. The working class, the driving force of the country, must be heard. And they must be heard not only in this working class community; these types of exercises must be done throughout the country. It is amazing that these types of activities exist because it is important for people to be heard. Personally, when I was growing up here, there were people that guided me, that taught me, that involved me in activities that enabled my growth as a good human being. The opportunity to listen to the people of my community and being able to be that person that someone once was for me is what motivated me to join this project that allowed me to listen and learn".

JUAN PABLO, CFA

"In this community, we need to pay attention to the problem of drug addiction troubling our young people and to the insecurity issues that stem from this. We also need more streetlights, access to clean water, and better roads, as not all streets are paved. I joined this project not only because I had the spare time due to my age, as I can no longer work, but also because I wanted to listen to my people, and to contribute to the improvements that need to be done here, and to see how we can, as community members, to take part in the creation of such improvements. It is important that people are listened to. As citizens, we are not used to having a voice or a vote in the matters that concern us. Being heard is important to create an environment of mutual respect and healthy coexistence."

CÉSAR RUIZ, CFA



Project 1: Integrity Icon and Integrity Summit



MAIN RESULTS:

- Recognition of public servants in the Youth and Sustainability categories.
- Inspiration to replicate integrity practices nationwide.

LESSONS LEARNED:

During the Integrity Summit, we reflected on the lessons learned from the past Integrity Icon campaigns and explored how to build on that experience. We recognized that our work goes beyond acknowledging exemplary public servants for their integrity—it's about capturing their insights and making their successful projects replicable nationwide. We learned that in order to truly address the challenges and gaps within transparency, accountability, access to information, civic participation, and inclusion, we needed to foster ongoing conversations that delve deeper into the real-world impact of their initiatives.

Project 2: Civic Action Teams (CivActs)

MAIN RESULTS:

- Identification of key community needs in Yuguelito.
- Implementation of participatory strategies to address priorities.

KEY DATA POINTS:

- 255 surveys were completed.
- Training of 11 community frontline agents (CFAs)
- Workshop and engagement of 10 community committee coordinators.

LESSONS LEARNED:

- Structurally underserved communities often go unheard, limiting their access to opportunities and hampering local development.
- Listening to such communities, and engaging them in participatory processes that allows for their voices to be heard to inform action plans and for them to actively participate in the creation and implementation of such plans is a game-changer. It ensures that communities take ownership of the changes being created, raising awareness of the importance of their role as active and engaged citizens, increasing their commitment, and strengthening the social fabric.
- Underserved communities have a thirst to speak up, be heard, and to get involved, they just often lack the mechanisms and the platforms to do so.
- Accessing key information related to public programs, mechanisms and budgets enables them to engage in such processes to request service provision and the implementation of projects for community development ensuring their priority needs to be addressed and their rights to be guaranteed.





Additional Highlights

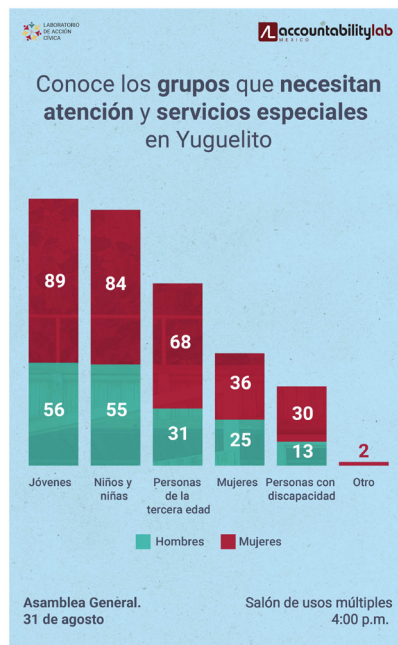
IMPACT STORIES:

- Our Integrity Icon Campaign inspired Dexis Consulting Group and the ProIntegridad program, which focuses on promoting integrity within the private sector. Together, we developed the campaign based on our methodology, adapted specifically to address challenges in the private sector. We are encouraged by the fact that our work has inspired efforts to extend the conversation on integrity beyond the public sector.
- The findings from the community data collection process, the results from the participatory processes with the community, and the action recommendations shared with the Yuguelito community leaders resulted in:
 - The implementation of three sports activities.
 - A community online registration process for digital public services.
 - The prioritization to access the city's public water system by conducting advocacy work to this end. This has now been approved by the local government, and soon the community will have access to this public service.
 - In establishing an active relationship with the local public security institution, who offered immediate assistance should security issues arise.
 - The beginning of the construction of a community dining room.
 - Initiating the reactivation of the community oven.

Advocacy and Policy

RESEARCH CONDUCTED:

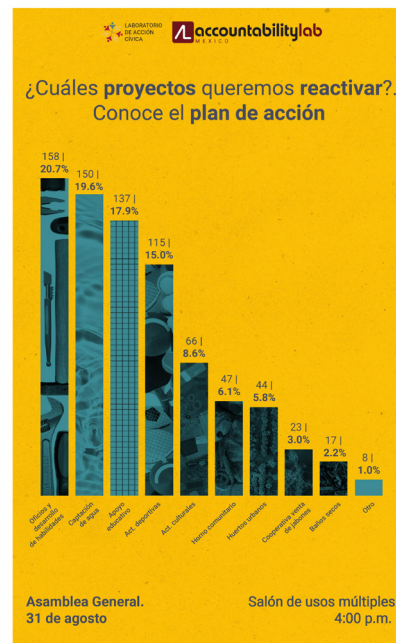
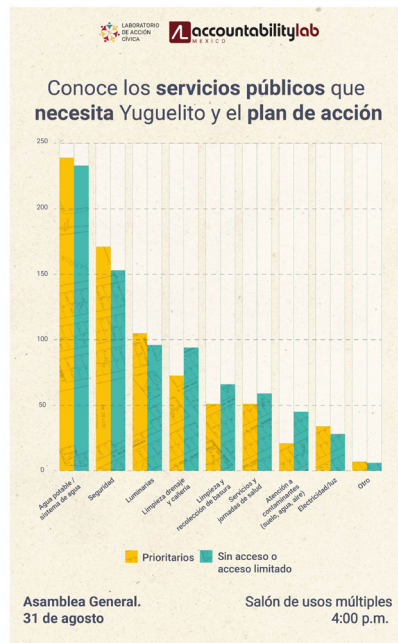
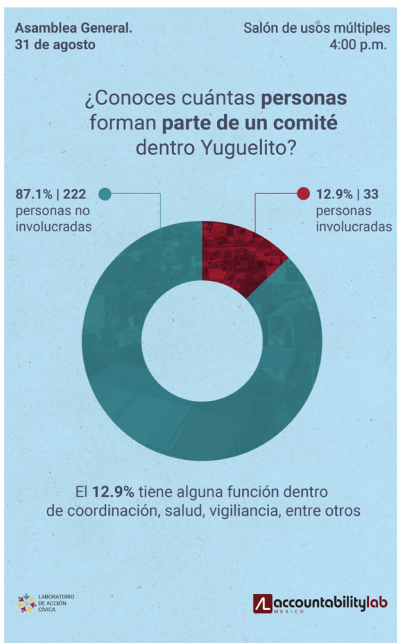
Community data collection diagnostics in Yuguelito.



FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

Annual budget

125,000 USD



Total number of grants **3**

Staff and volunteers **4**

Theory of Action in Practice

UNLIKELY NETWORKS:

Partnerships with community leaders in Yuguelito ensured deeper engagement and co-creation.

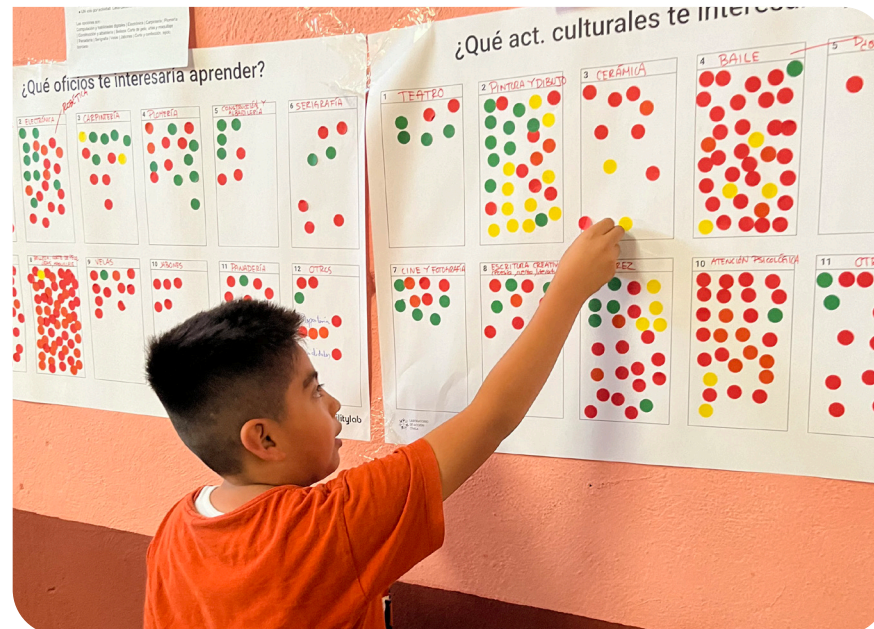
POSITIVE NARRATIVE AND UNLIKELY NETWORKS:

Integrity Summit 2024 marked a full circle moment: two of our programs, Integrity Icon and Voice2Rep became intertwined when Susana Montañez received the Integrity Icon award—herself having been the one who, alongside Dolores de León, fought for her freedom. Dolores, one of the voices of our past Voice2Rep process, mobilized the community that Susana serves at the Public Defender's Office in Nuevo León, gathering nearly a thousand votes in the process.

Our theory of action came to life through the convergence of **unlikely networks** and **positive narratives**. The story of Susana and Dolores, which connects the role of a songwriter in the Voice2Rep program with the Integrity Icon recognition, is an inspiring example of how legal practices can be addressed and transformed through a gender perspective defense.

When Dolores de León was unjustly incarcerated, Susana committed to designing a defense strategy that not only secured her release but also spurred the creation of the Women's Defense Unit in the state. Although the prosecution appealed and the case escalated to the federal level, Susana emerged victorious again, setting two historic precedents for gender justice in Mexico.

Meanwhile, while still incarcerated, Dolores joined Voice2Rep, a program that uses music and positive narratives as tools to foster democratic practices. Singer-songwriter and sociologist Leiden Gomis created and led a pilot adapted for incarcerated women called "Volver al corazón," allowing participants to compose collective testimonial songs that narrated their experiences and transformed art into a powerful medium to raise awareness about gender justice and the shortcomings of the legal system in Mexico.





Once she regained her freedom, Dolores nominated Susana for the Integrity Icon Sustainability campaign, recognizing her dedication and commitment to justice. Susana received the highest number of votes, establishing her as the campaign winner and highlighting her work in transforming legal practices and serving incarcerated women and their families. This recognition reaffirms the mission she continues to pursue to achieve a more equitable and gender-responsive justice system.

After the ceremony at the Integrity Summit, Susana made a video call to Dolores to share the good news and thank her for the nomination. During the call, Alemar Contreras—a lawyer and finalist from the Integrity Icon Youth campaign who works at the Council of the Judiciary of the Yucatán State Judicial Power—was present. Alemar told Dolores that, thanks to her, she had met Susana and that they would look for ways to collaborate in the future.

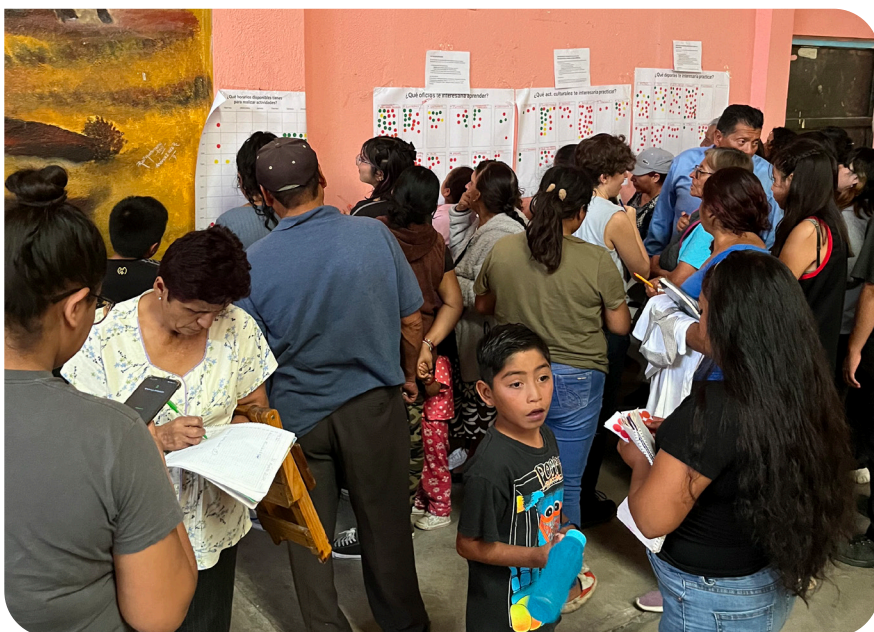
At the intersection of these initiatives, Voice2Rep amplified the voices of women affected by the justice system, while Integrity Icon highlighted the fundamental role of ethical public servants. Together, these stories embody the power of uniting unlikely networks and positive narratives to drive systemic change and advance gender equity.

SOUTH-SOUTH LEARNING AND COLLABORATION:

CivActs' success in Nepal was adapted to Mexico, leveraging insights from global programs.

LOCALIZATION:

Programs like CivActs prioritize solutions led and implemented by local communities, ensuring relevance and sustainability.



LEARN MORE

DONATE