

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

ZIMBABWE

2024

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Overview

Accountability Lab Zimbabwe (ALZ) continued its ecosystem-building work at sub-national, national levels. Some of this work was influenced by or found expression at the regional level through the Accountability Lab East and Southern Africa (ALESA) Regional Office. The work significantly contributed to strengthening transparent and accountable governance by supporting norm shifts and behavior change within and outside the state using positive narrative-building approaches. The interventions at multiple levels not only improved access to reliable and timely information but also strengthened citizens' engagement, supported change makers and positive deviants, strengthened coalitions for change and influenced accountability policy and practice.

Over the year, we deepened existing relations with state and non-state actors, reached out to new and unlikely partners – especially state accountability actors – and used our platforms, and where feasible, crowded the new and unlikely partners into invited accountability and governance spaces within the trans-local network. The state actors include Parliament, the prosecution authority, the police, selected ministries, the office of the Registrar General, traditional leaders, local authorities and independent commissions.

The new non-state actors include CSO partners in the humanitarian, disaster risk reduction, and resilience sectors who participated in multistakeholder spaces curated by ALZ to develop strategies to strengthen accountability in the drought response. The El Niño-Induced drought affected food security in most southern African countries that are still reliant on rain-fed agriculture.

The citizen engagement interventions at the local level increase access to timely and reliable information since an informed and engaged citizenry is essential for democratic governance. Citizen engagement also helped communities build consensus on challenges, develop innovative solutions required to solve them and formulate persuasive tactics to enlist the support of duty bearers, including co-creating such solutions with them. In 2024, ALZ piloted Integrity Innovation Labs (IILs) in four CivActs communities. The dynamic and diverse local coalitions for change that included community representatives, civil servants (Integrity Icons), and young change-makers (Accountapreneurs) with the support of representatives from independent commissions and law enforcement agents strengthened accountability at the local level. Where it made sense, community-level concerns were systematically escalated to national-level policymakers to raise awareness and encourage duty-bearers to support solutions to resolve such challenges.

Winning awards had always been on the list of what success for our creatives would look like. In 2024, our creatives bagged four awards in different categories at prestigious awards ceremonies. Three Voice2Rep artists were nominated for the 2024 Zim Hip Hop Awards. Banshee (V2R 2023) wowed the audience with an electrifying opening act and scooped the prestigious "Best Spoken Word Award". Mike Cibeh (V2R 2024) scooped the "Positive Social Impact Award", and Mr. Moreni (V2R 2024) was nominated for the "Best Alternative Artist" for his unique artistry. The short film "A Fragile Existence", produced by 2024 Film Fellows, received an award from Amnesty International Zimbabwe for the 'Best Broadcast Feature (TV) Award'. This was a great achievement for a short film that was only four months old by the time of the awards ceremony. We are immensely proud of the achievements of our leading creatives, who are making a difference through music and film.



ALZ strengthened the production and dissemination of knowledge products to catalyze conversations on key accountability issues and influence policy debate on the same. The convening of uptake meetings – staged specifically for the purpose of ensuring uptake of research findings by target audiences – paid off as the research products found their way into the media, key civil society platforms and most importantly, Parliament. These knowledge products on accountability in the sovereign wealth fund, the wildlife economy, and natural resource governance influenced the public sphere and policy debate on the same and strengthened the evidence base for advocacy by non-state actors.

In 2024, ALZ established an accountability journalism community practice and regularly sensitized the media on key accountability concepts and issues. Additionally, ALZ has played a pivotal role in strengthening investigative journalism in corruption reporting by fostering collaboration among journalists, editors, and media professionals. This initiative not only enhances transparency and ethical reporting on governance issues but also ensures that corruption cases are effectively exposed and publicized. By equipping the media with the tools to amplify citizen voices and

hold power to account, ALZ has worked to bridge the information gap, empowering communities to actively engage in governance and demand accountability discourse.

The work in Zimbabwe was also found expression at the regional level through the Accountability Lab's Regional Office for South and East Africa (ALESA). ALZ benefitted from the office's understanding of the regional issues and challenges and was crowded into regional and continental convenings such as the Digital Rights and Inclusion Forum and the Africa Philanthropy Conference, learning exchanges and the Alternative Mining Indaba.

Our key learning in 2024 was that trust and value-based relations take a long time to cultivate and nature, and the evolution of these relations is non-linear. This is particularly challenging with state actors that are often suspicious of the work at the least and at the most, the very actors we are trying to engage are involved in the corrupt practices we are trying to change. Patience is thus crucial in building accountability ecosystems.

By the Numbers



Dialogues/Conversations **27**

Total number of surveys/respondents **24**

What training workshops were conducted?

- All Cohorts Welcome
- Introduction to Accountability (Based on Module AL 100)
- Human rights and accountability ("Humability" Training)
- Environment, climate and conservation (Mana Pools Bootcamp)
- Advocacy
- Storytelling for impactful communication
- Resource mobilization
- Ideation and design
- Communications for Social Impact
- Communication and pitching

What topics were surveys conducted on?

- Land corruption
- Drug and substance abuse
- Impact of urban mining

PARTICIPANTS IN 2024



Cohort

- Integrity Icons
- Accountapreneurs
- Filmmakers
- Musicians
- AL Fellows

In Our Own Words



“What energizes me about working with the Lab is its unwavering commitment to accountability and transparency. Contributing to a mission that strengthens democracy—especially among young people—is deeply rewarding. The Lab’s collaborative environment fosters diverse ideas, creativity, and a shared purpose, making our work impactful and fulfilling. Seeing programs like V2R drive civic engagement and empower citizens to hold leaders accountable is incredibly motivating. What excites me most is the Lab’s growing focus on youth engagement and strengthened partnerships. By empowering young changemakers and expanding collaborations, we are building a more inclusive and effective movement for accountability. The potential for real, lasting impact keeps me inspired every day.”

MIKE CIBEHE (2023 V2R ARTIST)

“What energizes me about working with the Lab is its commitment to walking alongside us, rather than ahead of us. The Lab creates space for participants to learn, unlearn, and adapt—an invaluable approach, especially for startups still finding their footing. Nothing is set in stone, allowing for flexibility and growth. I also appreciate the Lab’s inclusive and collaborative approach to problem-solving. The ability to share knowledge and work across fellowships—such as Accountapreneurs, VR2, and the Film Fellowship—fosters a strong sense of community and innovation. Even after completing the incubator program, we’re always welcome to return for guidance. This ongoing support has been particularly valuable for the Food justice network (FJN), as starting something from scratch is both difficult and exhausting. The Lab continues to provide the operational development support we need, making a significant difference in our journey.”

**ROSELILLY USHEWOKUNZE (2023 ACCOUNTAPRENEUR
AND CO-FOUNDER OF THE FOOD JUSTICE NETWORK)**





“What excites me about working with Lab is its unique approach to youth programming—one that embraces experimental learning and provides consistent guidance. Here, we are encouraged to take risks, make mistakes, and grow, all in pursuit of greater impact. The Lab allows us to focus on meaningful change rather than getting bogged down by the complexities of running an initiative. There are no rigid structures, no pressure—just support, learning opportunities, and thoughtful guidance. Instead of imposing their will, they listen, learn, and respond to ensure the best outcomes. Most importantly, the staff is friendly, approachable, and treats us as true partners rather than just program beneficiaries.”

SOX THE POET (2023 FILM FELLOW)

“Accountability Lab is truly inclusive—it transcends the barriers of tribe, race, and background, bringing together people from all walks of life. At my workplace, I may be considered a “Grade D,” but Accountability Lab saw my potential and gave me an opportunity, which has been incredibly motivating. Being recognized among top changemakers has inspired me to strive for excellence. What stands out most is the spirit of collaboration. The team works seamlessly towards a shared goal, with different individuals stepping in at different moments, yet always aligned in purpose. This dynamic approach makes me feel like an integral part of the institution. I have also witnessed true inclusion in their workshops, where everyone is free to contribute their thoughts without fear of control or judgment. It’s a space that fosters open dialogue, learning, and collective wisdom—making it not just an organization, but a hub of ideas and growth.”

TARIRO ZITSENGA (2022 INTEGRITY ICON)



Project 1: New Narratives for Accountability Zimbabwe (NNAZ)



Since 2020, ALZ has been implementing the flagship “New Narratives for Accountability in Zimbabwe (NNAZ)” project. NNAZ has played a crucial role in encouraging communities to explore innovative methods to improve governance outcomes from the ground up and address deeply rooted political, social, and economic issues around accountability. The NNAZ project has facilitated the realization of community rights and motivated government and service providers to meet their responsibilities. Although the NNAZ Project had a national reach, the community-focused initiative – Civic Action Teams (CivActs) – specifically targeted the districts of Bulawayo, Chitungwiza, Goromonzi, and Harare.

The NNAZ theory of action is centred on making governance work for the people utilizing the Lab’s skills, financial resources, knowledge, information, networks, and relationships to campaign, learn, train, convene, advocate, design interventions, and build coalitions for systemic change. This theory of action laid the groundwork for the NNAZ program’s Theory of Change (ToC), which posits that if citizen engagement increases, if diverse voices leverage new networks and spaces to enhance accountability, and if positive deviants within targeted institutions foster good governance, then the rights of targeted communities will be realized, government and service providers will meet their responsibilities, and democratic governance that serves an engaged citizenry will improve.



The NNAZ Project is programmatically anchored on a suite of activities organized under four main workstreams:

1. Civic Action Teams (CivActs),
2. The Accountability Incubator
3. Arts4Change
4. The Integrity Icon Campaign
5. Research and policy influencing

CIVIC ACTION TEAMS (CIVACTS)

Civic Action Teams (CivActs) in Goromonzi, Mbare, Chitungwiza and Bulawayo strengthened engagement by promoting dialogue between citizens and duty-bearers on community challenges identified through listening meetings and surveys. The dialogue builds trust, enhances transparency, and promotes good governance in target districts. In 2024, ALZ engaged in advocacy at the national level using strategic communication, research and uptake meetings, and policy analysis to influence national discourse on accountability. The advocacy issues include drug and substance abuse, the dangers of urban mining and land corruption.

To promote greater integration of the NNAZ project pillars, VR2 artists performed at CivActs events, and documentaries from the film fellowship were screened in CivActs communities. This expanded the reach of CivActs interventions, especially among the youth. NNAZ has worked to strengthen citizen participation in governance, ensuring that people are not just passive recipients of government services but active agents of change.

IMPACT MADE AND LESSONS LEARNT?

CivActs played a crucial role at the grassroots level in surfacing community concerns, notably through town hall meetings, community listening sessions, and media engagements. For example, in Harare's Mbare suburb, a campaign led by women mobilized by CivActs resulted in the repair of blocked drainage systems after persistent advocacy with the city council. Similarly, in Glenview, a citizen petition led to the temporary suspension of a corrupt local officer. These instances underscore how access to information and collective action can drive tangible governance improvements.

CivActs listening meeting in Chitungwiza – a productive discussion with residents on land corruption and its impact on the community.

SPACE 10.00 CAT
Thur 23 November, 2023
[HTTPS://BIT.LY/ALZSPACE7](https://bit.ly/ALZSPACE7)

RECALLS & BY-ELECTIONS:
(AB)USE OF SECTION 129-1-K AND ITS IMPLICATIONS
ON ELECTORAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND DEMOCRACY

FARAI MARAPIRA
Zimbabwe African National Union - Patriotic Front (Zanu PF) Information Director

KAREN MANZERA
Information and Advocacy Officer at WELCAD Trust

PROMISE MKWANANZI
Citizens Coalition for Change (CCC) Spokesperson

JASMINE TOFFA
Member of Parliament for Bulawayo Metros

BELOVED CHIWESHE
Deputy Chief of Party, New Narratives for Accountability in Zimbabwe (NNAZ)

NOOBIZITHA MULO
Human Rights Lawyer

BATHABILE DLAMINI
MODERATOR

SPACE 10.00 CAT
THURSDAY 19 OCTOBER

DECIPHERING THE IMPACT OF SECTION 129K: A DEEP DIVE INTO VOTER RIGHTS

FARAI MARAPIRA
Zimbabwe African National Union - Patriotic Front (Zanu PF) Information Director

Duduzile Mathema
Bulawayo Progressive Residents Association (BPRA) Communications officer

Promise Mkwanzani
Citizens Coalition for Change (CCC) Spokesperson

BATHABILE DLAMINI
MODERATOR

[HTTPS://BIT.LY/ALZSPACE6](https://bit.ly/ALZSPACE6)

SPACE
Thur 15 February, 2024

ENHANCING ACCOUNTABILITY IN ZIMBABWE'S 2024 NATIONAL BUDGET

SHERYL CHIGWEDERE
Programs Officer Sprout Women Empowerment Trust

VINCENT CHAKUNDA
Public Finance Management Expert Midlands state university

SAMANTHA SIBANDA
Director at Signs of Hope Trust

SAMUEL WADZAI
Director at Vendors Initiative for Social & Economic Transformation (VISET)

MAKOMORERO MUROPA
Regional Program Officer AL - South & East Africa Program

OSWALD MUDZINGWA
Economic Analyst at Parliament Budget Office

BATHABILE DLAMINI
MODERATOR

ALZ thought leadership X-Spaces conducted from October 2023 until September 2024

SPACE Thursday 18 JULY, 2024
09.00 CAT

UNPACKING THE AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT: FOSTERING ACCOUNTABILITY OF PUBLIC FUNDS IN ZIMBABWE

VINCENT CHAKUNDA
Public Finance Management Expert Midlands State University

NAMATAI KWEKWEZA
Executive Director | WELCAD Trust

BLESSING GOREJENA -NDLOVU
Chairperson | ALZ

ZIBUSISO DUBE
Programs & Campaigns Officer | Accountability Incubator Lead | ALZ

BATHABILE DLAMINI
MODERATOR

[BIT.LY/ALZSPACE9](https://bit.ly/ALZSPACE9)

SPACE THURSDAY 23 MAY, 2024
10.00 CAT

UNDERSTANDING THE ZIMBABWE GOLD: UNPACKING, DEMYSTIFYING AND IMPLICATIONS

Hon. Edwin Mushoriwa
Edwin is the Member of Parliament for Dzivarasekwa

Rosellily Ushewokunze
ALZ Accountapremier | Social & Economic Justice Advocate

Dr. Nicholas Masyandima
Deputy Director at Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe

Beloved Chiveshe
Deputy Chief of Party, New Narratives for Accountability in Zimbabwe (NNAZ)

Chenayi Mutambasere
Development Economist

BATHABILE DLAMINI
MODERATOR

[HTTPS://BIT.LY/ALZSPACEMAY23](https://bit.ly/ALZSPACEMAY23)

SPACE Thursday 18 JULY, 2024
09.00 CAT

UNPACKING THE AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT: FOSTERING ACCOUNTABILITY OF PUBLIC FUNDS IN ZIMBABWE

VINCENT CHAKUNDA
Public Finance Management Expert Midlands State University

NAMATAI KWEKWEZA
Executive Director | WELCAD Trust

BLESSING GOREJENA -NDLOVU
Chairperson | ALZ

ZIBUSISO DUBE
Programs & Campaigns Officer | Accountability Incubator Lead | ALZ

BATHABILE DLAMINI
MODERATOR

[BIT.LY/ALZSPACE9](https://bit.ly/ALZSPACE9)

Space Friday, October 18, 2024
10:00 CAT

Land Tenure and Fast Track Land Reform: Governance, Accountability, and Inclusion in Zimbabwe's New Tenure Policy

Upenyu Makoni-Muchemwa
Moderator

Chenayi Mutambasere
Development Economist

Takura Zhangazha
Political Commentator

Dr. Phillan Zamchiya
Researcher

<https://bit.ly/ZimLandTenureShift>

<https://bit.ly/ZimLandTenureShift>

Social media and digital engagement significantly amplified citizen participation. The use of Twitter Spaces to host interactive discussions on governance issues saw participation numbers rise from 24,000 to 379,000 over the reporting period. The topics covered included the impact of economic policies on service delivery, electoral reforms, and strategies for combatting corruption. This digital outreach not only extended the project's influence but also created a platform for real-time discussions between citizens and policymakers. The X-Space discussions focused on the country's electoral systems, the budget, illicit financial flows and land tenure. These discussions focused on accountability issues related to the selected topics.

THE ACCOUNTABILITY INCUBATOR

The Accountability Incubator welcomed a new cohort of ten (10) Accountapreneurs in March 2024. The initiatives of the 2024 cohort focus on digital governance, inclusion, climate justice, and civic agency. An “All Cohorts Welcome and Inception Meeting” of the Class of 2024 marked the beginning of a year-long journey of mentorship, training and accompaniment for the young civic leaders whose applications demonstrated the capacity to influence their hyperlocal accountability ecosystems (geographical or practice). The current cohort participated in training workshops on civic leadership, citizen engagement, accountability, environment, climate, advocacy, storytelling for impactful communication, resource mobilization, ideation and project design, communication and pitching. Each accountapreneur was paired with a staff member for guidance and support as they designed and implemented practical solutions for governance and accountability issues affecting their communities.

A key highlight of the training curriculum was an immersive Climate Change Boot Camp for individuals from past and current cohorts of the Voice2Rep, the Accountability Film Fellowship, and the Accountability Incubator. This unique training experience, staged in the Mana Pools National Park in September 2024, was designed to break hotel and conferencing monotony and make the training methodology more engaging, interactive, and exciting for young people. The boot camp involved a combination of workshop-style learning sessions, guided walks in the park, and evening bonfire discussions, providing participants with a comprehensive and immersive learning experience.

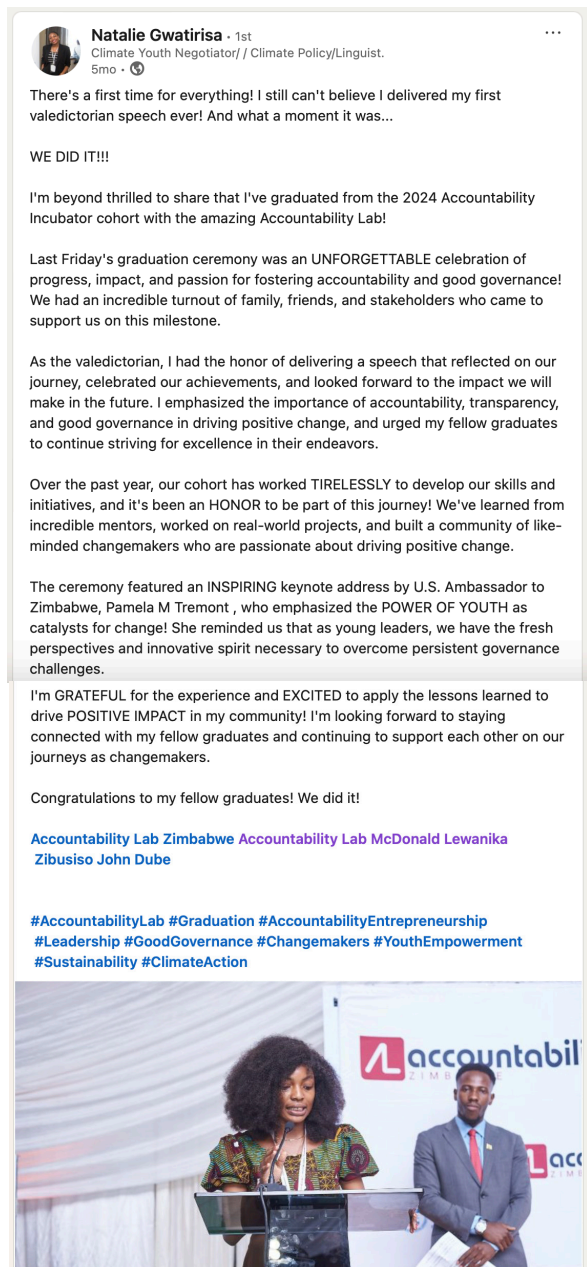
The camping safari in the Mana Pools National Park wilderness provided participants with a unique learning environment, where they could learn from experts, the environment, and each other. The workshop unpacked the science of climate change, gender and climate change, carbon credit schemes, accountability in climate action, climate change controversies and the far-reaching impacts of climate change on the younger generation.

The boot camp equipped participants with the knowledge and tools to integrate climate change considerations into their long-term plans and creative endeavors. The inclusion of all cohorts was a deliberate choice to give participants equal



treatment and to foster opportunities for collaboration among young creatives from various Accountability Lab cohorts. A WhatsApp group with all participants and experts—initially designed to coordinate the boot camp—has been a useful knowledge and information-sharing platform, further strengthening the sense of community.

Concurrently, the incubator facilitated the “crowding in” of accountapreneurs from previous cohorts – now in the alumni network – into platforms, networks, and spaces that allow them to grow their initiatives. This initiative has significantly expanded the reach and impact of the program, as it has allowed past participants to continue their work and share their learnings with new cohorts. This also includes ALZ events and the broader accountability trans-local networks at the local, national and international levels. The youth in the alumni network are working on the climate crisis, corruption, service delivery, and civic engagement. The involvement of young people from the incubator facilitated the inclusion of youth, artists, and grassroots leaders in key accountability conversations.



Natalie Gwatisira from the 2024 cohort of the Accountability Incubator hit the ground running soon after joining the incubator. Natalie is a climate youth negotiator representing Zimbabwe, following her training at UNICEF Young Negotiators Academy and other institutions.

With her background in linguistics, she is creatively integrating her skills in disseminating climate information in ways that resonate with diverse audiences through “All For Climate Action (AFCA)”, an organization she founded.

AFCA promotes the participation of young people by advocating for inclusive climate empowerment, climate democracy and justice, and localized climate solutions. AFCA has been hosting climate cafés and has had the privilege of hosting one of the cafés at the residency of the Canadian Ambassador.

The climate cafés are informal platforms for conversations that interrogate climate policies and facilitate cross-pollination of ideas among stakeholders, especially young people, as they ideate climate solutions. Her passion, expertise, and community-centered approach are powerful in the fight against climate change. Through AFCA, Natalie is making a significant impact in Zimbabwe and beyond.

While her institution has made huge strides, she has witnessed personal growth, leading to her appointment to the AU-EU Youth Advisory Board. The AU EU Youth Voices Lab focuses on interventions that support young Africans on the continent and the diaspora in Europe in their journey towards increased engagement, connection, and empowerment to enablers/decision-makers in their journey to develop equal partnerships with young people and to create the conditions to address the key needs and priorities of the younger generations. Natalie attended COP 29 through the generous support and goodwill from the ALZ trans-local network. While in Azerbaijan, she met Ruth McFallen - Kandemiri and Petronella Nyarai Chigede, and together, they launched the Global Impact Initiative (GIIT) to increase their impact by leveraging their unique perspectives, skills and networks.

THE ARTS4CHANGE PROGRAM

ALZ, in collaboration with Magamba Network, implements the Arts4Change Program. The Program uses inclusive and creative mediums, such as film, music, and digital storytelling, to empower young people and marginalized groups, strengthening their engagement on governance and accountability issues. The Film Fellowship (FF) and Voice2Rep equip participants with the skills to produce documentaries, music, and digital media content addressing social justice and governance issues.

VOICE2REP

The Voice to Represent (“Voice2Rep”) music competition supports young musicians using their voices to influence social norms. Voice2Rep builds a network of musicians, producers, mentors, judges, and socially conscious music fans passionate about social change. The Arts4Change Program welcomed ten (10) young musicians (six women and four men) selected from 131 applications; the ten constitute the 2024 Cohort of Voice2Rep. Over the years, Voice2Rep has supported young artists passionate about some of the causes and themes that resonate with young people, including advocating for more meaningful representation and participation of young people in the accountability discourse in Zimbabwe.

The training and mentorship support for the V2R artists kicked off with the “All Cohorts Welcome”, where the V2R artists met and interacted with film fellows and accountapreneurs. The V2R artists had training sessions on songwriting, composition techniques, stage performances, the constitution, financial literacy and marketing. They also attended an “all cohorts” communications for social impact workshop hosted by ALZ for accountapreneurs, V2R artists and film fellows. The workshop imparted communication skills across digital and non-digital platforms to participants, who were encouraged to use communication as a powerful tool to showcase their work, amplify their voices, and make a social impact. V2R artists also attended the Climate Change Boot Camp in the Mana Pools National Park.

In addition to the technical skills of making good music, the training curriculum also improved the artists’ social consciousness. It instilled in the participants a

strong work ethic, time management, discipline and professionalism. Voice2Rep artists received guidance from established industry professionals. They had the opportunity to connect with socially conscious leaders in the music industry and build the skills they need to shape the future through music. After the training, the artists worked on solo projects that included each of the artists producing at least one song.

The solo projects culminated in the release of a ten-track album titled “Zvirimumoyo,” launched in Shamva in July 2024. The album captures the struggles of young Zimbabweans and amplifies their voices. The V2R artists performed at the album launch, Peace in the Hood concert, and Mashup Night in September 2024. Performances at the Shoko Festival attracted significant audiences, reinforcing the project’s objective of embedding accountability narratives in mainstream cultural spaces.

A remarkable achievement for Voice2Rep in 2024 was the nomination of three Voice2Rep artists for the 2024 Zim Hip Hop Awards. Banshee (V2R 2023) wowed the audience with an electrifying opening act and scooped the prestigious “Best Spoken Word Award”. Her poetry, rooted in social consciousness, demands justice and amplifies the fight for human rights. When she went on stage to collect the award, she had a placard written “Send our girls back to school”. Mike Cibeh (V2R 2024) scooped the “Positive Social Impact Award” in recognition of his efforts to use music for accountability and positive change. Mr. Moreni (V2R 2024) was nominated for the “Best Alternative Artist” for his unique artistry.

Voice2Rep Zimbabwe finalists Mr. Moreni and Rumbidzai Mutasa collaborated and produced the song “Tivake Zimbabwe” – let’s build Zimbabwe. The song encourages citizens to uphold integrity and reject corruption. The V2R artists performed the song at the ALZ local authorities summit in October 2024. The summit was attended by local authorities and residents associations from twelve urban and rural councils. The V2R artists also performed at the 2024 Accountability Incubator Graduation and Friendraiser in November 2024. The nominations and awards embolden the dedication and passion of the young artists in their craft. We are immensely proud of their achievements and equally emboldened in our approaches and belief in young people.

THE ACCOUNTABILITY FILM FELLOWSHIP

The 2024 cohort of the Film Fellowship had five (5) aspiring filmmakers (3 women and two men) selected from a pool of eighty-six (86) applicants. The Film Fellowship mentors future generations of socially conscious filmmakers and equips them with the prerequisite skills for accountability and social justice advocacy through visual storytelling. The reduction in the number of film fellows – from ten to five – and the decision to have the film fellows collaborate on two films instead of producing a film each was to allow for in-depth mentoring and training to improve the quality of the films and maximize impact.

The fellows received training and mentorship on key aspects of filmmaking, including film production techniques, script writing, directing, cinematography, storytelling, and advocacy. In addition to the technical skills of making good films, the filmmakers also gained an appreciation of accountability, governance, social justice, and financial literacy from experts and activists within the accountability ecosystem and established film industry professionals. The five film fellows also attended the Climate Change Boot Camp in Mana Pools National Park.

The 2024 Cohort produced two documentaries highlighting community social justice and accountability issues. The two films are “A Fragile Existence,” which sheds light on the climate challenges faced by people with albinism, and “The Water Thieves,” which exposes corruption in water governance. The fellowship culminated in the BOKOLA film festival, where the fellows’ work was showcased to industry professionals, stakeholders, and policymakers.

These films have sparked conversations on inclusion and natural resource governance. Subsequently, they were used as conversation starters during mobile and ghetto cinema screenings to stimulate dialogue on the issues highlighted in the films. All films were shared on digital platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram, making them accessible to broader audiences beyond Zimbabwe. “A Fragile Existence” was nominated for and received an award from Amnesty International Zimbabwe under their Media Awards, winning the ‘Best Broadcast Feature (TV) Award’. This was a great achievement within the four-month premiere of the film, showcasing the film’s potential for further exposure and traction in sharing its key themes and messaging.



The 2024 Integrity Icon awardees at the 2024 II Awards Ceremony, joined by ALZ Board Chair Blessing Gorejena (left), Chitungwiza Hospital Public Relations Officer, 2024 Icon Audrey Tasaranarwo (second from left), Ward Development Coordinator and 2024 Icon, Simon Zinhoro (third from left), Principal Human Resources Officer and 2024 Icon Mpumelelo Musekiwa (center), Provincial Development Officer and 2024 Icon Merjorie Sikundla (third from right), USAID Zimbabwe’s Head of Democracy, Rights, and Governance Office Armindo Banze (second from right), and ALZ Country Director McDonald Lewanika (right).

THE INTEGRITY ICON CAMPAIGN

The Integrity Icon Campaign has been instrumental in promoting good governance by supporting positive deviants within the state. The campaign identifies, celebrates, and empowers honest civil servants who demonstrate integrity to fosters a culture where ethical behavior is the norm rather than the exception. The campaign is impacting the recipients of the awards and communities alike because of the prestige that comes with being honored. The campaign’s growing influence is evident through government recognition, and partnerships with state accountability and anti-corruption actors. In 2024, the campaign celebrated five (5) icons who were identified through popular public participation.



Furthermore, public engagement with the campaign has expanded significantly, with [radio broadcasts](#) reaching over 72,000 listeners and social media and media partnerships extending awareness to more than 109,789 people. These efforts have helped institutionalize integrity as a core value in public service, influencing both policy and practice within key state institutions

Icons who were honored in previous years are using their icon status to push for integrity within their spaces in government and in their communities. Tariro Zitsenga, a nurse stationed at the biggest public hospital in the country introduced the Change Champions Program at Parirenyatwa Hospital after being honored as an icon. For example, the nomination of Tariro Zitsenga as an Integrity Icon led to the establishment of a “Change Champions” program at Parirenyatwa Group of Hospitals, where hospital staff work collectively to improve service delivery and ethical conduct. Fundile Nkala, a teacher by profession and an icon, is working on the “Teacher Transfer Dashboard”, which she hopes will reduce corruption in teacher transfers through increasing transparency. An Icon from the Registrar Generals Department – infamous for corruption in the issuance of key documents of citizenship – was deployed to South Africa to lead the establishment of Zim’s consulate in the neighboring country. The Registrant General told the ALZ lab team that the deployment was because of the integrity he has demonstrated over the years and the icon status which the department could not ignore.

Over the years and with the number of icons increasing, ALZ has established a network of honest civil servants collectively pushing for change. By connecting Integrity Icons across different institutions, the campaign has fostered collaboration in addressing systemic corruption.

The Integrity Icon Campaign has had a significant impact on promoting integrity and accountability in public institutions by fostering a culture of ethical leadership and encouraging reform-minded civil servants to push for change. By publicly recognizing 15 Integrity Icons, the campaign has not only motivated individual civil servants but also influenced institutional practices. Additionally, the campaign has encouraged cross-sector collaboration, such as Integrity Icon Godfrey Dembure’s Teacher Transfer Dashboard, which is actively reducing bribery in teacher placements, and the Tech Class Initiative, which is expanding access to education while curbing corruption in extra lessons.



Guests at the Integrity Icon Zimbabwe Ceremony signing the Integrity Icon Pledge, committing to uphold human rights and the safety of all people, support equity and the inclusion of diverse voices, and defend equal opportunities for everyone.

In 2024, the Traditional leaders embraced the integrity-building efforts at the grassroots level and partnered ALZ to host a local integrity awards ceremony in his community, broadening the campaign's impact. Additionally, widespread public engagement through media has solidified integrity as a national conversation, inspiring ongoing governance reforms. Additionally, the campaign has highlighted the importance of grassroots engagement, as efforts like the Nkayi Integrity Awards have shown that integrity-driven conversations resonate more when they involve local communities, traditional leaders, and youth. At the grassroots level, the campaign has engaged communities in accountability discussions, particularly through partnerships like the Chief Dakamela's Nkayi Integrity Awards, which brought traditional leaders, faith-based organizations, and local citizens into the conversation on governance.

A key lesson from this campaign is that recognition and public celebration of integrity can be a powerful tool in shifting cultural norms around governance. By "naming and faming" honest civil servants, the campaign has shown that positive reinforcement can inspire others to uphold ethical standards. Secondly, strategic partnerships with government institutions can enhance civic space and create opportunities for systemic change, as demonstrated by the campaign's collaboration with ZACC and the Registrar General's Department. Thirdly, technology-driven solutions can be effective in combating corruption, as seen with the Teacher Transfer Dashboard and Tech Class Initiative, which minimize direct human interactions that often lead to bribery. Lastly, leveraging mass media and storytelling has proven to be an effective way to amplify the movement, increasing public participation and buy-in from both civil servants and citizens. Innovations like the Tech Class Initiative have also improved educational access for rural learners.



Images of the 2024 Imiklomelo kaDakamele Integrity Awards in Nkayi.

RESEARCH AND POLICY INFLUENCING

A major highlight was the production of four research papers covering key issues such as [electoral accountability](#), [drug and substance abuse](#), and the governance of the [Mutapa Investment Fund](#). These papers were not only disseminated widely but also served as the foundation for two high-impact policy uptake meetings. These meetings, attended by parliamentarians, civil society actors, and media representatives, led to policy recommendations being raised in parliamentary debates, exemplifying the project's influence in legislative spaces. The engagement of young parliamentarians in these discussions demonstrated the growing interest in governance reforms among emerging leaders.

One of the most impactful pieces of research conducted was the policy brief on Drugs and Substance Abuse. This document provided a governance and accountability lens on the issue, leading to increased funding allocations in the 2024 national budget, rising from USD 1.8 million to USD 1.2 billion. Furthermore, the policy note was quoted verbatim in Senate debates, underscoring its role in shaping legislative discourse. The government's response included launching the Zimbabwe Multisectoral Drug and Substance Abuse [Plan 2024-2030](#), emphasizing improved coordination and accountability.

WHAT MAKES THE WORK SUSTAINABLE?

The sustainability of civics and research work is driven by institutionalization, strong networks, data-driven approaches, community ownership, digital engagement, and policy influence. The structured CivActs model and capacity-building initiatives for policymakers ensure continuous citizen engagement and informed decision-making. Established partnerships with media, civil society organizations, and government agencies create a lasting ecosystem for governance discussions. Research-based advocacy, policy briefs, and knowledge-sharing sustain informed debates beyond project cycles. By empowering communities to co-create solutions and lead advocacy efforts, civic action networks ensure long-term accountability initiatives. Digital platforms and media amplification further sustain discourse, while legislative impact and systemic policy changes embed governance improvements into institutions. This comprehensive approach ensures that civic engagement and research efforts remain relevant, impactful, and independent of external

support over time.

By investing in young leaders through mentorship, training, and resources, initiatives like the Accountability Incubator create a self-sustaining network of changemakers who continue to advance governance reforms. Digital tools, such as WhatsApp chatbots for municipal accountability and platforms for investigative journalism, ensure that citizen engagement remains scalable and cost-effective. These innovations reduce dependence on resource-heavy interventions while empowering communities to actively participate in governance. Additionally, the integration of arts and media through programs like Arts4Change and the Film Fellowship ensures that accountability efforts remain socially embedded, reaching diverse audiences through creative storytelling.

Institutionalizing integrity within public service further strengthens sustainability by fostering long-term systemic change. The Integrity Icon campaign, for instance, builds a network of ethical leaders within government institutions who continue to champion accountability beyond their recognition period. Strategic partnerships with agencies like the Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission and the National Prosecuting Authority ensure that governance reforms gain traction at the policy level. Furthermore, technology-driven solutions such as the Teacher Transfer Dashboard and the Tech Class Initiative address structural governance challenges, embedding accountability into public service delivery. At the community level, grassroots initiatives and broad media outreach sustain public engagement, reinforcing a culture of transparency and ethical leadership. By leveraging leadership development, digital innovation, and community-driven advocacy, these efforts ensure long-lasting impact in the fight against corruption.

IN TERMS OF OUTCOMES, WHAT ARE WE MOST PROUD OF?

Accountability Lab Zimbabwe is proud of CivActs for their role in driving policy influence and systemic governance improvements. The CivActs model has proven to be a powerful tool for citizen-driven advocacy, enabling communities to surface critical governance issues and push for tangible policy changes. One of the most significant successes has been the policy brief on Drugs and Substance Abuse, which directly contributed to a major national policy shift. The 2024 national budget saw a dramatic increase in funding for state-led initiatives tackling drug

abuse, rising from USD 1.8 million to USD 1.2 billion. This increase demonstrates how evidence-based advocacy, rooted in grassroots engagement, can translate into substantial governmental action, ensuring that citizen concerns are met with concrete policy commitments.

Another key achievement of CivActs has been its role in fostering transparency and accountability in public financial management, particularly through engagement on the Mutapa Investment Fund. By facilitating community discussions and ensuring that information on the fund's governance was widely disseminated, CivActs played a crucial role in amplifying public scrutiny. This contributed to increased parliamentary debates and policy discussions, compelling policymakers to address concerns about transparency, oversight, and the management of national resources. The ability of CivActs to turn citizen concerns into legislative discussions underscores its effectiveness as a platform for civic engagement and governance reform.

Furthermore, the expansion of the MCOP highlights CivActs' success in building sustainable networks for governance accountability. By fostering collaboration between journalists, civil society, and policymakers, CivActs has ensured that governance issues remain in the public eye. The MCOP's sustained focus on governance, corruption, and service delivery has empowered media actors to hold authorities accountable, creating an ongoing dialogue that extends beyond short-term interventions. This expansion strengthens the ecosystem of accountability by equipping media professionals with the knowledge, resources, and networks needed to continuously monitor and report on governance issues, reinforcing the long-term impact of CivActs' work.

IN TERMS OF OUTCOMES, WHAT ARE WE MOST PROUD OF?

Accountability Lab Zimbabwe takes great pride in the success of CivActs, which has been instrumental in driving policy influence and systemic governance improvements. The CivActs model has empowered communities to surface critical governance issues, leading to significant policy changes. One of the most notable achievements is the policy brief on Drugs and Substance Abuse, which played a direct role in increasing government funding for drug abuse initiatives from USD 1.8 million to USD 1.2 billion in the 2024 budget, demonstrating the power of evidence-based advocacy. CivActs has also contributed to transparency in public

financial management, particularly through its engagement on the Mutapa Investment Fund, which led to increased parliamentary scrutiny and public awareness.

Additionally, the expansion of the Media Community of Practice (MCOP) has fostered collaboration between journalists, civil society, and policymakers, ensuring governance issues remain a central focus in public discourse. By equipping media professionals with knowledge and resources, CivActs has strengthened the accountability ecosystem, enabling sustained oversight of governance and service delivery issues.

The Accountability Incubator has successfully nurtured 43 Accountapreneurs, many of whom have established impactful initiatives such as the Matobo Youth Development Initiative (MYDI) and the Community Podium. These projects enhance civic engagement and transparency in local governance, proving that investing in young leaders fosters sustainable accountability movements. Through the Arts4Change Program, initiatives like Voice2Rep and the Film Fellowship have provided innovative platforms for young people to address governance issues through music and film. The documentary "The Water Thieves," highlighting corruption in water administration in Bulawayo, sparked nationwide discussions and was showcased at the Bokola Film Festival. Similarly, the Voice2Rep album "Zvirimumoyo" has amplified young artists' voices in advocating for governance reforms.



ALZ visits the Matobo Youth Incubation Center, where 2021 Accountapreneur Descent Deco Dube is championing accountability through youth empowerment, good governance capacitation workshops, entrepreneurship, and a sustainable mushroom production project.

Impact in Numbers

POLICY INFLUENCE AND GOVERNANCE ACCOUNTABILITY

\$1.2 billion Increase in national budget allocation for drug and substance abuse initiatives, up from \$1.8 million, following the CivActs policy brief.

2 Policy uptake meetings – Engaged Parliamentarians, civil society, and media, leading to heightened scrutiny of governance issues like the Mutapa Investment Fund.

3 major governance themes addressed – Electoral accountability, drug and substance abuse, and financial transparency of state funds.

379,000 digital participants – Engaged through online discussions, including Twitter Spaces, reflecting increased public interest in governance issues.

200 journalists, editors, and communication practitioners – Now part of the expanded Media Community of Practice (MCOP), strengthening media oversight on governance.

EMPOWERING CHANGEMAKERS THROUGH THE ACCOUNTABILITY INCUBATOR

43 Accountapreneurs supported – 20 women, 21 men, and 2 non-binary individuals.

33 active initiatives – 10 still in the incubator, fostering grassroots accountability efforts.

57 applications received – For the Accountability Incubator program.

4,500 people reached online – Through outreach and capacity-building sessions.

ARTS FOR CHANGE – FILM FELLOWSHIP & VOICE2REP

FILM FELLOWSHIP

5 new fellows selected – From 86 applications (3 women, 2 men).

34 filmmakers trained – 20 women, 1 transgender, 13 men.

10 films showcased – At the Bokola Festival.

2 provincial screenings – In Masvingo and Buhera.

“A Fragile Existence” – **Watched by 335 viewers online.**

VOICE2REP

10 musicians selected – From 131 applicants (6 women, 4 men).

4th NNAZ album Zvirimumoyo – 10 tracks produced, **1,900+ YouTube plays.**

Notable Achievements:

- **Mike Cibeh (V2R 2024)** – Awarded for **Positive Social Impact**, using socially conscious music for accountability.
- **Banshee (2023 V2R)** – Winner of **Best Spoken Word** at the 2024 Zim Hip Hop Awards; song “Defiance” (on gender-based violence) was runner-up in the social impact category.

INTEGRITY ICON CAMPAIGN – PROMOTING ETHICAL LEADERSHIP

Nominations increased – From **173 (2022) to 286 (2023)**, demonstrating growing recognition of ethical leadership.

Government department participation grew – From **2 (2022) to 15 (2023)**, integrating integrity into public service.

72,000+ listeners – Engaged through the Integrity Icon Awards Summit radio broadcast.

109,789+ people reached – Through media coverage on ZBC TV, Star FM, and Radio Zimbabwe.

80,000 listeners – Engaged during the Star FM roadshow in Mbare, leading to **53 direct nominations** from the public.



Project 2: Strengthening Public Integrity and Community Engagement (SPICE) on Transparency and Accountability

OVERVIEW OF OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

ALZ implemented the “Strengthening Public Integrity and Community Engagement (SPICE) on Transparency and Accountability” project from June 2023 to October 2024 with support from “The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit” (GIZ). The SPICE project – anchored by CivActs – improved access to information and the quality and frequency of interactions between citizens and duty-bearers in Bulawayo and Chitungwiza. While the project empowered target communities to hold duty-bearers accountable, the project also encouraged citizens and duty bearers to co-create solutions to community challenges. The project had a direct reach of 24’356 and an indirect reach of 73’068 citizens.

Through the SPICE project, ALZ piloted Integrity Innovation Labs (IIL) in Zimbabwe with indications that there is scope for scaling. The IILs led by civil servants are reform-oriented coalitions made up of accountapreneurs, civil servants, community members, local authorities, law enforcement agencies, representatives from the anti-corruption commission and experts on various topics to address local

challenges. The project's approach of combining community-led initiatives with the expertise of civil servants has proven to be effective in addressing complex challenges and driving positive change.

CivActs in Chitungwiza worked on land corruption while the teams in Bulawayo focused on urban mining. In Chitungwiza, the project produced a policy paper that investigates land corruption using the political settlements approach and a WhatsApp chatbot that provides residents with accurate and up-to-date information on land-related matters, empowering them to report instances of corruption and irregularities. In Bulawayo, the project facilitated dialogue on urban mining between the community, solution holders and mining companies. ALZ produced a documentary on urban mining entitled "Time Bomb, The Impact of Urban Mining on the City of Bulawayo".

ALZ screened the documentary in Harare and Bulawayo to stimulate debate on the challenge of urban mining among key stakeholders at a national level. The documentary spotlighted and catalyzed conversations and influence urban mining policy and practice. The project generated valuable insights and informed policy through combining data-driven research with community engagement. In October 2024, ALZ convened a local government integrity summit in Harare. The Summit was a platform for civil society, residents associations, representatives of local authorities and the Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission (ZACC) to discuss ethical leadership and transparency in local governance.

IMPACT AND LESSONS LEARNED

The impact of the SPICE project is evident in its ability to empower communities to act against corruption and demand better governance. In Chitungwiza, the project's interventions led to the arrest of council officials implicated in land corruption. The WhatsApp chatbot provided residents with a reliable tool to report corruption anonymously, increasing citizen-led oversight. In Bulawayo, the project facilitated direct engagements between mining companies and affected communities, resulting in the mining companies contributing to solving community challenges such as water shortages and supporting underprivileged to access education.

Key lessons learned include the importance of working with both elected and ap-

pointed officials to ensure continuity in governance engagement, especially given Zimbabwe's volatile political landscape. The project also reinforced the power of technology-based solutions, such as the chatbot, in enhancing transparency, though it highlighted the need for broader awareness and adoption of such tools. Furthermore, collaboration across sectors, including civil society, local authorities, and law enforcement, proved essential in addressing governance challenges effectively.

SUSTAINABILITY OF THE WORK

The establishment of Civic Action Teams is an essential initiative for the sustainability of the project as the teams will remain active in the communities and continue to push for accountability using the tools and skills from the SPICE Project beyond the project lifecycle. This is evidence that the project empowered communities to stand on their own and be able to demand their rights.

The sustainability of the SPICE project lies in the institutionalization of accountability mechanisms within communities. The CivActs and Integrity Innovation Labs (IILs) will continue beyond the project's lifespan, equipping citizens with the tools and skills to engage in governance oversight. The partnership with the Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission (ZACC) has also strengthened institutional responses to corruption, ensuring that community concerns are addressed at higher levels.

Moreover, the [documentary on urban mining](#), produced as part of the project, has created a lasting resource that can stimulate national discourse on mining governance. The development of an Integrity Manual provides a reference for local authorities and civil servants to uphold transparency and ethical leadership. Finally, the integration of digital solutions, such as the WhatsApp chatbot, presents a scalable model that can be expanded to other communities facing similar governance challenges.

MOST PROUD OF

The SPICE project takes great pride in its ability to empower citizens to act against corruption and hold leaders accountable. One of the most significant achievements was the arrest and prosecution of corrupt officials in Chitungwiza, following community-duty bearer engagements facilitated by the project. By equipping citizens with tools such as the WhatsApp chatbot, residents were able to report land fraud anonymously, leading to tangible legal consequences. In Bulawayo, the project successfully bridged the gap between communities and mining companies, ensuring that residents' concerns about urban mining were heard. This engagement resulted in mining companies allocating resources for school tuition, clean water, and road rehabilitation, demonstrating the power of community-driven advocacy.

Additionally, the urban mining documentary produced through the project has amplified governance discussions beyond the initial communities, sparking a national conversation on mining regulation and corporate responsibility. The project is also proud of the institutionalization of accountability mechanisms, including the CivActs and IILs, which will continue to drive community-led oversight beyond the project's lifespan. By fostering strong partnerships with ZACC and other stakeholders, the project has strengthened institutional responses to corruption, ensuring that citizen-led governance reforms are sustained in the long term.

Impact in Numbers

24,356 **citizens directly reached** through community engagements, training sessions, and public forums.

73,068 **citizens reached indirectly** through media outreach, including radio discussions and social media engagement.

6 **CivActs cycles conducted**, involving listening meetings, surveys, and community-duty bearer engagements.

4 **Integrity Innovation Labs held**, focusing on corruption in land management and urban mining.

1 **Integrity Summit hosted**, bringing together local authorities, civil society, and anti-corruption bodies.

1,900+ **citizens engaged** with the WhatsApp chatbot, leveraging digital tools for transparency.

2 **councilors arrested** following citizen-led accountability efforts.

5 **engagement meetings held** between Bulawayo communities and mining companies, leading to direct benefits such as school tuition assistance and water access improvements.

1 **documentary produced** on urban mining, expanding advocacy beyond the project's lifespan.

Project 3: Evaluation Community Values in Southern Africa (ECVSA)

The ECVSA Project, implemented in collaboration with Tree of Life (ToL) and Washington State University (WSU) explored whether community-based interventions could foster social trust and cohesion while reducing perceived and actual threats and violence. This action research, using randomized and controlled treatment (RCT) approach in four districts of Zimbabwe: Harare, Goromonzi, Bulawayo, and Gwanda, covered 12 communities across both urban and rural locales. Two different interventions were tested – a community level governance and accountability intervention (Accountability Lab treatment) as well as a trauma-informed psychosocial awareness intervention (Tree of Life) treatment). The findings of the research demonstrate that community level interventions can directly contribute to improvements in societal cohesion in violence-affected regions. In communities in which Accountability Lab conducted CivActs Civic Community Workshops, community members reported substantially lower levels of fear and threat within their communities.

MAIN OBJECTIVES:

To answer the question: Is it possible to build trust and societal cohesion in communities that have experienced substantial violence and conflict?

MAIN OUTCOMES:

- A total of 4800 responses were collected from 12 communities.
- Successful execution of community treatment interventions, including CivActs Future Search Workshops and Tree of Life's Psychosocial Awareness and Coping Skills Workshops.
- Increased community trust and cohesion through participatory workshops and localized engagement.
- Identification of key community challenges, including political fear, economic hardships, and social divisions.



Enumerators being briefed on randomization during data collection and research ethics.



Enumerators in Glenview pose for a group photo before data collection.

IMPACT AND KEY LEARNING

The impact of the project was substantial. Through structured community dialogues and psychosocial support workshops, participants gained a stronger sense of connection and trust within their communities. Future Search Workshops facilitated the development of Community Values Statements, helping citizens articulate shared aspirations and commitments. Additionally, psychosocial awareness and coping skills workshops provided critical support for individuals dealing with trauma, fostering resilience and enhancing their capacity to engage constructively in community life. The interventions not only improved interpersonal relationships but also empowered citizens to advocate for better governance and accountability. Despite operating in a politically volatile environment marked by shrinking civic space, the project successfully engaged local authorities, secured police cooperation, and navigated challenges such as surveillance by political actors.

One of the key lessons learned was the importance of early and ongoing community engagement. By securing buy-in from local authorities and stakeholders, the project was able to ensure the safety of its enumerators and facilitate smoother data collection processes. Additionally, the use of technology for coordination, particularly through WhatsApp groups, proved effective in enabling real-time problem-solving and communication among enumerators.

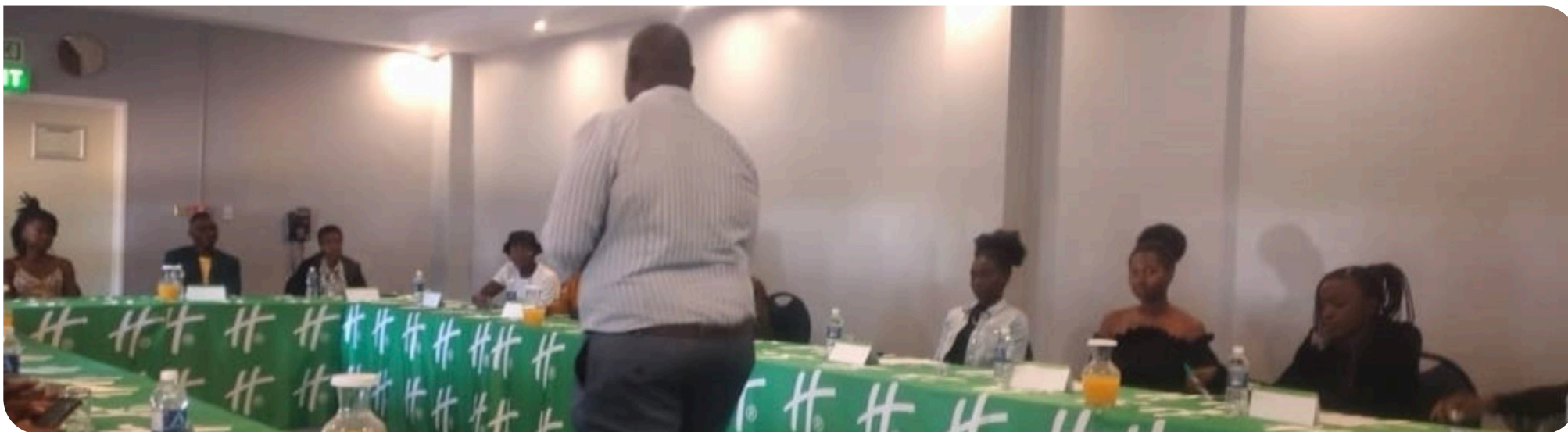
The project also highlighted the necessity of continuous follow-up to sustain the benefits of interventions, as well as the need to adapt to local contexts. For example, in Zimbabwe, survey instruments had to be adjusted to align with historical education classifications, ensuring that data collection accurately reflected the distinctions between “Standard” and “Grade” classifications used in different regions. This adaptation improved participant understanding and response accuracy, ultimately strengthening the project’s impact. The politically sensitive environment reinforced the importance of proactive trust-building efforts to alleviate fear and encourage participation.

WHAT MAKES THE WORK SUSTAINABLE

The sustainability of the project is anchored in community ownership and institutional partnerships. By equipping community members with tools to articulate their values and priorities, the interventions laid the groundwork for long-term engagement in governance and social cohesion efforts. The integration of mental health support through the psychosocial workshops ensured that individuals developed coping strategies that could continue to benefit them beyond the project’s timeline. Furthermore, partnerships with local authorities, community-based organizations, and governance actors provide a foundation for continued impact. Digital tools used for coordination and data collection also offer a mechanism for tracking progress and maintaining engagement over time.

WHAT WE ARE MOST PROUD OF

Among the project’s achievements is its ability to transform communities in challenging political and social contexts. The creation of Community Values Statements helped unify residents around shared goals, while structured dialogues and workshops improved community resilience. The project navigated political barriers, ensuring that interventions were implemented even in high-surveillance areas. Moreover, the extensive data collected offers valuable insights into the state of community trust and cohesion, contributing to a broader understanding of governance challenges in Zimbabwe. By fostering an environment where citizens can actively shape their communities and advocate for accountability, the project has made a lasting impact.



Part of the participants during a training workshop for Bulawayo Enumerators

By the Numbers

4800 responses collected from 12 communities.

30 trained enumerators deployed.

9 communities received intervention treatments.

480 citizens directly engaged in Future Search Workshops.

79.6% of workshop participants rated them as highly effective.

22,500+ people benefited from Tree of Life's mental health support programs.

Project 4: Strengthening Initiative Towards Human Rights – Respecting Use of Digital Technologies in Africa.



ALZ in partnership with the Business and Human Rights Resource Center implemented the “Strengthening Initiative Towards Human Rights – Respecting Use of Digital Technologies in Africa Project”. The project raised awareness on the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and encouraged the telecommunications sector to respect human rights and adopt policies that help them identify, prevent, mitigate and account for how they address their impacts on human rights. The project increased awareness of business and human rights principles by telecommunications companies and encouraged them to adopt explicit stand-alone human rights policies. The project promoted engagement and dialogue between mobile network operators, regulators, and civil society. High-level convenings between stakeholders facilitated insightful conversations on internet shutdowns, data privacy, and corporate accountability.



The project commissioned a study in the inception phase of the project. The study – evaluating the human rights policies and practices within Zimbabwe’s telecommunications sector – strengthened the evidence base for advocacy. According to the findings, most mobile network operators in Zimbabwe do not have explicit stand-alone human rights policies. Only one company had a human rights policy outlining rights of workers and consumers. Almost all participating telecommunications companies did not have explicit policies on the protection of children’s rights from the potential negative impacts of their work. The project also identified gaps in state mechanisms to address human rights violations by telecommunications companies despite the many consumer rights issues.



Participants at the seminar on business and human rights in July 2024

IMPACT AND LESSONS LEARNED

The impact of the project was most evident in breaking new ground in corporate accountability within the telecommunications sector. By engaging telecommunications companies in human rights conversations, the project fostered an unprecedented dialogue on digital governance, which had previously been absent in Zimbabwe. The project facilitated engagement between civil society and telecommunications stakeholders on their human rights obligations. This marked an important shift, as companies began to recognize their responsibilities beyond regulatory compliance. According to the MNOs, the high level convening was the first meeting they had attended specifically focusing on human rights.

Another key impact was the finalization of a research study on telecommunications and human rights, which identified critical policy gaps and highlighted areas for advocacy. The study found that only one telecommunications company in Zimbabwe has an explicit human rights policy, while most companies lack awareness programs on consumer digital rights. The research also revealed that Zimbabwe's legal framework does not provide adequate safeguards against human rights violations by telecommunications companies, particularly regarding internet shutdowns and data privacy.

Key lessons learned included the importance of multi-stakeholder engagement in addressing human rights challenges. Telecommunications companies were initially hesitant to participate in the survey due to concerns about reputational damage. However, individualized engagement and back-channel negotiations helped build trust and secure participation. Another lesson was that advocacy on digital rights requires a long-term approach, as corporate policy changes take time. The project also underscored the need for public awareness campaigns to educate consumers on their digital rights and the responsibilities of telecommunications providers.



Accountability Lab in Ghana for DRIF 2024

SUSTAINABILITY OF THE WORK

The sustainability of the project is rooted in the institutional relationships and policy dialogues it established. The engagement with telecommunications companies, the telecoms regulator POTRAZ, civil society, and Chapter 12 commissions (such as the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission and the Zimbabwe Media Commission) has laid the foundation for ongoing conversations on digital governance. The recommendations from the seminar have been integrated into national advocacy efforts, providing a roadmap for future engagements.

The project's findings and recommendations were presented at the Digital Rights and Inclusion Forum (DRIF) in Ghana in 2024. This demonstrated how local issues

and approaches can be amplified and integrated at a regional level through Accountability Lab South and East Africa (ALESAs). Conversations initiated in one country can stimulate dialogue and action at a regional level. The research findings serve as a baseline that can be used for advocacy and policy engagements.

Moreover, the relationships established with journalists who attended the dissemination meetings present an opportunity to amplify digital rights issues through media coverage. The [blog post on technology](#) and human rights, published in the Resource Centre Africa Newsletter in November 2023, has further contributed to regional awareness of Zimbabwe's digital rights landscape.

MOST PROUD OF

One of the project's greatest achievements was successfully engaging telecommunications companies in conversations about human rights and digital governance, a topic that had been largely ignored in Zimbabwe. The seminar on business and human rights was the first of its kind, allowing civil society to directly engage mobile network operators, the telecommunications regulator (POTRAZ), and the human rights commission. This groundbreaking dialogue represents a critical step towards promoting accountability within the telecommunications sector.

Another significant accomplishment was the study on human rights policies in the telecommunications sector. The study highlighted gaps in corporate policies, consumer rights awareness, and state regulation, providing concrete evidence for future advocacy. The dissemination of the findings in February 2024 allowed for further engagement with industry players, and the recommendations from these discussions will continue to shape national and regional advocacy efforts.

The project is also proud of its role in amplifying digital rights conversations beyond Zimbabwe. By securing a session at the DRIF in Ghana, Accountability Lab has positioned itself as a key player in regional discussions on business and human rights in the digital space. This expansion of influence demonstrates the long-term impact and relevance of the project.



Accountability Lab in Ghana for DRIF 2024

By the Numbers

1 research study completed – Evaluating human rights policies in Zimbabwe's telecommunications sector.

2 major convenings held – A **seminar on business and human rights** (July 2023) and a **research validation meeting** (February 2024), engaging **telecommunications companies, regulators, civil society, and human rights commissions**.

1 policy dialogue secured at the Digital Rights and Inclusion Forum (DRIF) in Ghana (2024) – Ensuring regional visibility for the project's findings.

1 blog post published – On **technology and human rights**, featured in the Resource Centre Africa Newsletter in November 2023.

1 ongoing advocacy effort – Engaging telecommunications companies to develop **human rights policies** aligned with international best practices.

Project 5: Accountability Lab South and East Africa (ALESA)

Accountability Lab Zimbabwe is hosting the Accountability Lab South and East Africa (ALESA) regional office. In 2024, ALESA expanded its reach and influence in the region and promoted CSOs participation and voice in the demand for accountability. This approach ensured that the intervention left no critical constituencies behind while enhancing civil society participation, voice, and accountability in global democracy initiatives. Additionally, ALESA will leverage regional platforms like the Digital Rights and Inclusion Forum and the Alternative Mining Indaba to amplify local voices globally. The regional program also ensured the participation of women and young people in the regional and continental governance convenings. AL observed that when young people lead governance initiatives, they bring fresh perspectives, innovative solutions, and sustained civic engagement. These efforts ensured that youth, women, and grassroots organizations were meaningfully engaged in the activities and spaces supported through and that local communities were represented in national, regional, and global arenas. AL worked intentionally and consistently to create spaces that empower multiple voices—not just as participants, but as leaders shaping the discourse, strategies, and interventions that drive democratization. In March 2025, it convened 25 to 30 young people from across the African continent to engage with the impacts of shifting dynamics in the global development financing landscape and to participate as equal partners in the OGP Regional Summit for Africa and the Middle East, as well as the Global Democracy Forum's Africa convening. The Washington office also facilitated access and participation in key global events. The diverse platforms facilitated and convened by ALESA strengthened collaborative learning partnerships through collaborations with over 15 regional and international organizations and influenced accountability ecosystems through. The work, as articulated below falls into three broad categories namely: (1) Coordination, convening and platforming (2) Network and field building, and (3) Thought leadership and narrative building.

COORDINATION, CONVENINGS, AND PLATFORMING:

The strategic participation in approximately 12 regional and global events, ALESA not only contributed to greater critical engagement within civil society but also facilitated participation from the government and the private sector, allowing stakeholders to identify synergies and explore collaboration opportunities. This involvement of over 325 stakeholders throughout the year ultimately improved multi-stakeholder understanding and responses to key challenges such as democratic backsliding, limited citizen participation, and the shrinking funding base affecting local CSOs and communities. ALESA coordinated regional accountability actors and where necessary convened regional stakeholders – including unlikely and hard to reach partners. At different stages and in different processes, AL ensured the involvement of traditional leaders, government officials, the private sector, community leaders, national civil society organizations (CSOs), coalitions, creatives, youth, and women. ALESA participated in the Africa Forum of the S4D, the Democracy Moves Annual Conference, the Digital Rights and Inclusion Forum in Ghana, the annual meeting of the SADC Lawyers Association and the Africa Philanthropy Conference, the Alternative Mining Indaba, the Seed Sovereignty Workshop and the Youth PLUS Fund Workshop for Climate Feminism. ALESA facilitated BHP Foundation's Partner Learning Exchange Dialogues (PLxD) in Zambia in May 2024 and RESOLVE's Resource Exchange in South Africa in November 2024. The AL collaborated with the allowed it to share peer-to-peer knowledge with natural resource governance partners, advancing its learning coalition approach. These processes generated practical insights for enhancing cross-border resource governance and contributed to connecting local issues to global conversations. To tackle these cross-border governance gaps, AL will adopt a regionalized accountability framework. This approach will involve creating regional accountability coalitions that unite civil society organizations, governments, and communities to collaboratively design solutions to shared governance challenges.

NETWORK AND FIELD BUILDING:

ALESA is building an accountability ecosystem in the region. The trust-based relationships are important to facilitating the exchange of best practices, and catalyzing change and empowering movements to rethink power across sectors and contexts using accountability lenses. This involved building collaborative networks where individuals, government agencies, private sector entities, and civil society organizations came together to learn, share knowledge, and innovate around accountability and governance challenges. Learning coalitions were premised on partnering with other organizations for active learning across sectors and geographies, enabling varied stakeholders to co-design practical solutions, adopt best practices, and amplify successful approaches to governance and accountability in their contexts. ALESA is particularly proud of its role in positioning youth and feminist voices at the center of governance conversations. Through engagements such as the Youth PLUS Fund Workshop for Climate Feminists, ALESA provided a space for young climate activists and feminist leaders to collaborate on governance solutions that prioritize social justice and sustainability.

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP AND NARRATIVE BUILDING:

In convening and field building initiatives, the regional office infused thought leadership and narrative as a cross-cutting theme. The production of knowledge and its dissemination in the translocal network was an important priority for the regional office. For example, AL led the construction and solidification of *learning coalitions*. Through these mutually supportive coalitions, AL sought to widen the network of collaborators in the democracy, governance, and rights ecosystem by enabling peer-to-peer learning and a cross-pollination of ideas and pathways of engagement. ALESA utilized podcasts, op-eds and strategic posts on AL's social media pages as platforms for evangelizing on democracy and transparent accountable governance. The regional office authored opinion pieces and articles including the [Open Government Partnership](#) (OGP), [the 2024 Super Election Year](#), lessons on building [new narratives for accountability](#), and [shaping the future of natural resource governance](#), among others, along with several podcasts such as those from the Centre for Strategic and International Studies' [Into Africa](#) and the [Centre for African Philanthropy](#) and Social Impact. The regional office used diverse engagement strategies, including digital platforms and hybrid gatherings for narrative building work on key issues and themes. These themes include

extractives, youth and women participation, digital governance, climate justice. These engagements ensured that youth inclusion, environmental accountability, and corporate governance reform remained high on the regional policy agenda. Additionally, ALESA played a leading role in shaping regional governance narratives by convening critical discussions at the Summit for Democracy, Alternative Mining Indaba, and Democracy Moves Conference.

IMPACT AND LESSONS LEARNED

The impact of ALESA's work is evident in its ability to mobilize grassroots communities, strengthen regional collaboration, and influence governance narratives. ALESA successfully amplified community voices in governance spaces, particularly through the Alternative Mining Indaba, where community representatives were able to engage directly with policymakers and extractive industry stakeholders. The Summit for Democracy and Democracy Moves Conference provided a platform for youth advocacy, ensuring that governance discussions prioritized youth political participation and leadership.

One of the major lessons learned was the importance of community-led accountability as the most sustainable governance approach. Through ALESA's engagements in mining regions, it became clear that communities demand greater transparency, fair revenue-sharing mechanisms, and stronger environmental protections. ALESA's advocacy reinforced the need for equitable benefit-sharing in the extractive industries, ensuring that corporate and governmental decision-making includes community perspectives.

Another key insight was the importance of cross-border collaboration in governance work. Natural resource governance, climate justice, and digital rights challenges often transcend national borders, requiring regionalized accountability approaches. ALESA leveraged platforms such as the PLxD and RESOLVE Resource Exchange Summit to facilitate peer learning and cross-country policy exchanges, ensuring that governance solutions are contextually relevant and widely applicable. Additionally, ALESA learned that youth inclusion in governance needs to go beyond voting advocacy. Many civil society programs focus on young people as voters, but ALESA's engagements at the Democracy Moves Conference highlighted the need to position youth as political leaders, policymakers, and governance innovators.

CHALLENGES

A significant challenge was achieving participation parity among CSO actors, academics, government officials, and representatives from youth and women in the community. This issue partly arises from the cultural challenges stemming from the patriarchal nature of African societies, where there are considerable differences relating to authority, age, and gender.

SUSTAINABILITY OF THE WORK

The sustainability of ALESA's impact is anchored in three key strategies:

- 1. Institutionalizing community-led governance frameworks** – ALESA will continue scaling its CivActs model, a citizen help desk system that facilitates community-driven accountability. CivActs has proven effective in gathering citizen grievances and enabling responsive governance at the local level. Expanding this model regionally will enhance cross-border monitoring of governance challenges, particularly in natural resource governance, climate justice, and digital inclusion.
- 2. Building regional accountability coalitions** – ALESA is creating regional multi-stakeholder coalitions that bring together civil society, government agencies, private sector actors, and communities to co-design governance solutions. These coalitions will promote knowledge-sharing and joint advocacy efforts, ensuring long-term impact beyond individual projects.
- 3. Leveraging digital tools for governance advocacy** – As civic space continues to shrink in many African countries, ALESA is shifting towards digital engagement strategies, expanding the use of social media, online organizing, and digital rights advocacy. This approach ensures sustained citizen engagement even in repressive political environments. ALESA's involvement in the Digital Rights and Inclusion Forum has laid the groundwork for stronger corporate accountability in digital governance, particularly holding telecommunications companies accountable for human rights violations.

By the Numbers

- 6** major governance convenings attended, including the Alternative Mining Indaba, Summit for Democracy, and RESOLVE Resource Exchange Summit.
- 10+** regional partnerships strengthened with civil society organizations, government agencies, and private sector actors.
- 100+** youth and feminist leaders engaged in governance dialogues through the Youth PLUS Fund Workshop for Climate Feminists.
- 5,000+** community members impacted through ALESA's CivActs model and grassroots governance initiatives.
- 50+** policymakers, corporate executives, and civil society leaders engaged in digital governance and telecommunications accountability conversations.
- 20+** governance-focused discussions and panels convened to influence regional accountability narratives.
- 1** major commitment to scaling youth political leadership in governance, ensuring young people are positioned as leaders, not just voters.

Additional Programming Highlights



Banshee received the award for Best Spoken Word Artist at the 2024 Zim Hip-Hop Awards.



Banshee, before her electrifying performance on Morning Rush, ZTN Prime, 2024

IMPACT STORY 1:

AMPLIFYING VOICES, INSPIRING CHANGE:

The Impact of Accountability Lab Zimbabwe on Bhanshee's Journey

The moment Bhanshee's name was announced as the winner of the Best Spoken Word Artist at the Zim Hip Hop Awards, she felt an overwhelming sense of validation. Years of dedication, resilience, and purpose-driven artistry had culminated in this moment.

"Winning at the Zim Hip Hop Awards was an incredible feeling! It showed me that my voice matters and that my perspective is valuable. I felt a deep sense of gratitude for the people who supported me along the way, especially Accountability Lab and Magamba Network," she shared.

This recognition was not just a personal achievement but a significant milestone for socially conscious music in Zimbabwe. Bhanshee had carved out a space for powerful storytelling in hip-hop, blending activism with art to challenge societal norms and advocate for gender justice and mental health awareness.

Bhanshee's involvement in the Voice2Rep (V2R) initiative, spearheaded by Accountability Lab, was a turning point in her career. The program rekindled her love for hip-hop and gave her the resources and confidence to produce her first song, "[Defiance](#)," a powerful anthem on womanism. The track resonated widely and earned her multiple nominations at both the Zim Hip Hop Awards and the Changamire Hip Hop Awards. Notably, she was nominated for Best Female Hip Hop Artist, Best Positive Social Impact, and Best Alternative, solidifying her place as a leading voice in socially conscious music.

Reflecting on the impact of Accountability Lab, Bhanshee acknowledges that the workshops and mentorship she received were instrumental in shaping her understanding of music as a tool for advocacy. “Being part of the program played a pivotal role for me as an artist. Throughout the program, we had classes led by accountability experts, and from them, I learned various ways to use my music and voice when addressing critical issues,” she shared.

With the exposure gained from her music and her participation in the V2R initiative, Bhanshee’s opportunities expanded beyond Zimbabwe. Through the support of the British Council, she traveled to Kigali, Rwanda, for the Access Music Festival, one of Africa’s largest music events. There, she not only performed but also attended a songwriting camp under Universal Music Publishing Group and 5th Season, further refining her craft.

The momentum continued when she won the Best Spoken Word Artist award at the Zim Hip Hop Awards, a testament to her talent and impact. She describes the moment as an overwhelming validation of her work.

Beyond the accolades, Bhanshee’s music carries a message of empowerment and healing. Having grown up witnessing the marginalization of women and the struggles surrounding mental health, she channels her experiences into her art. Her annual event, [Battlescars and Healing](#), is dedicated to mental wellness, creating a safe space for dialogue and healing through artistic expression.

Bhanshee’s journey is far from over. As she explores new collaborations and labels, her focus remains on creating music that inspires and educates. “I’ve been independent so far, but I’m now in talks with new labels. More than anything, I want my music to continue being a tool for advocacy and change,” she said.

Bhanshee’s success is a testament to the power of platforms like Accountability Lab Zimbabwe, which provide young artists with the tools to merge creativity with activism. By investing in artists who speak truth to power, the program is cultivating a new generation of musicians who are not just entertainers but also change-makers.

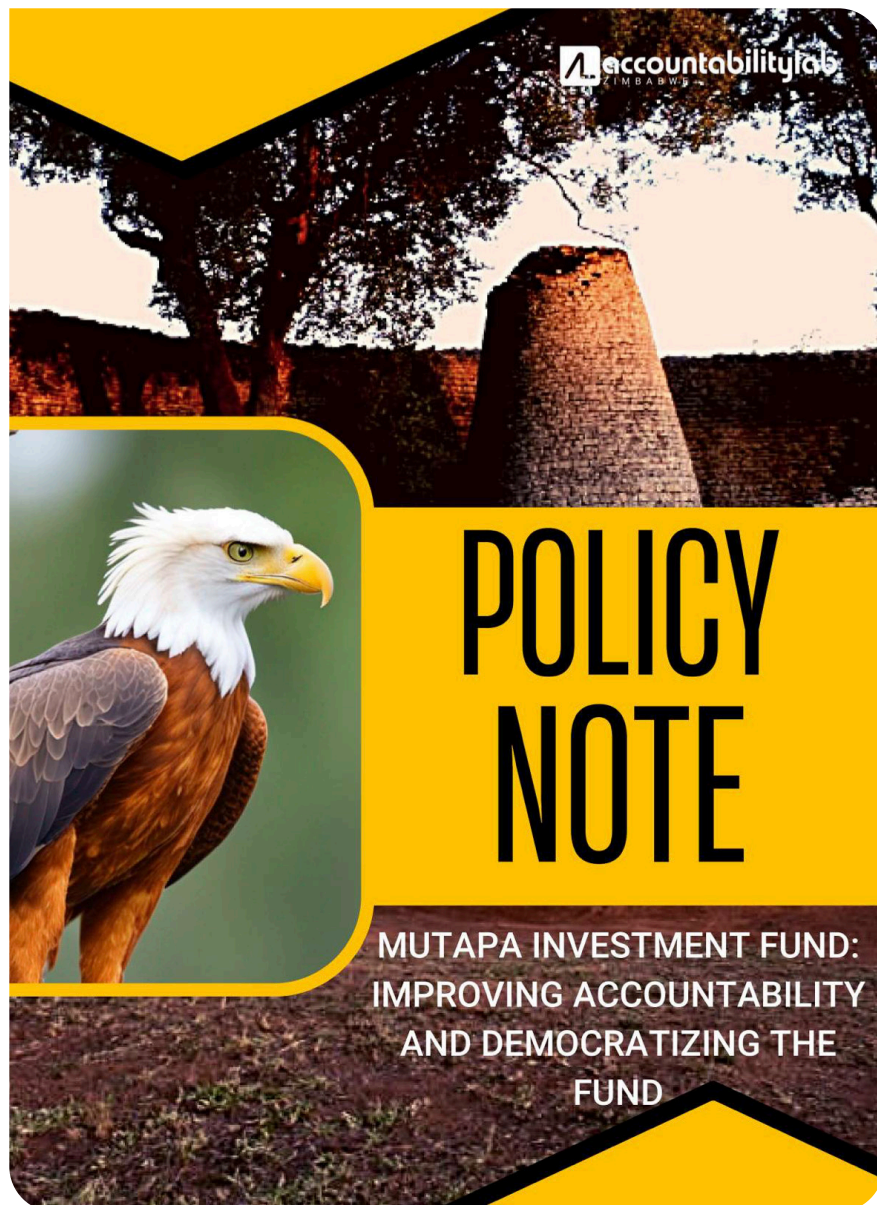
As Bhanshee aptly puts it, “Teamwork makes the dream work. When you have an idea or a plan, you need a team to execute it. And if not me, then who?”



Bhanshee performing 'Defiance' at Word Kalcha Poetry Slam 2025



Behind the Scenes: 2023 Shoko Festival Rehearsals with Bhanshee



The cover of the AL policy note on the MIF

IMPACT STORY 2:

ACCOUNTABILITY LAB STRENGTHENS ROLE AS A THOUGHT LEADER AND ECOSYSTEM BUILDER ON THE MUTAPA INVESTMENT FUND (MIF)

The Mutapa Investment Fund (MIF), initially established under the Sovereign Wealth Fund Act ([Chapter 22:20 of 2015](#)), was renamed through Statutory Instrument [156 of 2023](#). It functions as a super parastatal, housing twenty-six (26) publicly owned enterprises. However, the policy framework governing the MIF lacks meaningful checks, balances, and accountability measures, particularly parliamentary oversight. This makes the fund highly susceptible to political interference, especially from the executive.

In February 2024, Accountability Lab (AL) hosted a high-level breakfast meeting on the MIF, attended by 28 representatives from civil society, the media, and Parliament. During the event, AL presented a policy note highlighting the critical accountability gaps in the MIF's governance structure. The objectives of this engagement were to increase citizen engagement in public finance management and accountability (NNAZ IR1), provide accurate and relevant information to both citizens and service providers about the governance of the MIF (Expected Outcome 1.1), and enable communities to access resources and information, fostering long-term independence and social capital (Expected Outcome 1.2). The policy note underscored the need for the MIF to be insulated from political interference, adhere to best practices in human resources and procurement, and be transparent and accountable to its shareholders—the people of Zimbabwe. These key messages ignited an animated debate among stakeholders at the breakfast meeting, which was further extended to the public through social media platforms, radio discussions, and opinion articles.



Dr. Chitambaro highlights the urgent need for \$5 billion in annual infrastructure investment as Accountability Lab Zimbabwe hosts the Your Parliamentarians Expert Briefing on the Mutapa Investment Fund, advocating for good governance and citizen accountability.

As a direct outcome of this engagement, in May 2024, the Public Accounts Committee and the Budget and Investments Committee of Parliament formally requested capacity-strengthening support from AL. Responding to this request, in October 2024, AL organized a workshop attended by 20 parliamentarians from both committees. During this workshop, AL worked closely with parliamentarians to clarify Parliament's oversight role in ensuring the MIF operates transparently and in the public interest, advocate for public disclosure of the fund's investment strategies, asset holdings, and risk management policies, and equip legislators with tools to scrutinize the fund's activities effectively. Following the capacity-strengthening workshop, parliamentarians committed to concrete actions to enhance accountability in the MIF. These included moving motions in Parliament on MIF transparency and governance, asking direct questions to relevant ministers regarding the fund's operations, and subpoenaing MIF leadership to present reports and clarify governance concerns before parliamentary committees.

AL's engagement on the MIF aligns with its broader commitment to fostering transparency and accountability in the management of national resources. Recognizing the significance of public finance management, AL strategically positioned itself as a key player in this discourse. This approach was informed by its prior successful engagements with Parliament, including collaborations with the Youth Parliamentary Caucus on Drug and Substance Abuse and [consultations](#) with the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Environment, Water, Tourism, and Hospitality regarding the Parks and Wildlife Management Bill. Since 2022, AL has nurtured strong relationships with parliamentary secretariats and committee chairs, leading to increased trust in its ability to facilitate objective and non-partisan discussions on governance issues.



Youth Parliamentarians commend Accountability Lab for enhancing policy debate capacity as the Lab presents Drug and Substance Abuse policy note urging legislative reforms and a human-centered approach to tackling drug and substance abuse in Zimbabwe, during a December 2023 meeting attended by Youth Caucus Chairperson Hon. Stanley Sakupwanya (in photo), members of the Youth Caucus, the assistant Clerk of Parliament, the Clerk for the Parliamentary Youth Caucus, representatives from the Zimbabwe Defense Forces, the Zimbabwe Republic Police, and civil society representatives.



Hon. Tinashe Mushipe, The legislator for Matabeleland South Youth Quota (left), Youth Caucus Chairperson Hon. Stanley Sakupwanya (Centre) and ALZ Programs and Campaigns Manager, Beloved Chiweshe, post Drug and Substance Abuse uptake meeting.



Hon. Joana Ruvimbo Mamombe, Chair of the Committee, [shares insights](#) from the workshop facilitated by Accountability Lab Zimbabwe and partners on the Parks and Wildlife Management Bill, gazetted on April 19, 2024, ahead of nationwide public hearings from July 8-15 to ensure community participation and benefits.

To sustain momentum on MIF accountability, AL has engaged in publishing thought pieces and advisory notes on MIF governance, conducting radio interviews and panel discussions, and providing technical support and guidance to other civil society organizations advocating for greater transparency in the MIF. The AL policy note on the MIF has gained significant traction, with various citizens referencing it in [articles](#), opinion pieces, and public debates. This increased [public awareness](#) and advocacy have contributed to more informed discussions on the governance of the fund. By equipping key stakeholders with evidence-based insights, AL's work has substantially improved the quality of deliberations on the MIF, ultimately advancing transparency and accountability in Zimbabwe's public finance management.



A poster for the Media Community of Practice (MCOP) WhatsApp discussion, engaging over 200 journalists, editors, and development communicators in analyzing the public accountability challenges and implications of the transition from the Sovereign Wealth Fund (SWF) to the Mutapa Investment Fund (MIF)

A poster of one of the X-Spaces on the MIF



IMPACT STORY 3:

AMPLIFYING COMMUNITY VOICES ON URBAN MINING IN ZIMBABWE

In October 2024, Accountability Lab Zimbabwe (ALZ) unveiled the documentary [Time Bomb: The Impact of Urban Mining on the City of Bulawayo](#), shedding light on the pressing challenges posed by urban mining activities in the region. The premiere in Bulawayo, organized in collaboration with the Bulawayo Progressive Residents Association (BPRA) and the Centre for Innovation and Technology (CITE), attracted a diverse audience, including residents, community leaders, local authorities, and representatives from mining companies.

The documentary served as a catalyst for in-depth discussions on the adverse effects of urban mining, such as environmental degradation, structural damage to homes, and threats to heritage sites like the Khami Ruins. Trust Mkhwananzi, Chairperson of the Ward 17 Development Committee, [emphasized the urgency](#) of addressing these challenges, stating, “We need to hold an Indaba with all relevant

stakeholders, engage the government, and determine what should happen when resources are found in a settled area.

Representing the Mayor of Bulawayo, Ward 28 Councillor Ntandoyenkosi Ndlovu advocated for a reassessment of mining operations within urban settings and a revision of city bylaws to protect residents from associated risks. He argued that urban mining should be halted in Bulawayo, noting the need to weigh the positive contributions against the negative impacts.

The impact of the documentary was immediately evident during the Bulawayo screening at Pumula Hall, where residents from various wards, local councillors, and representatives from Hualin Quarry Pvt/Limited and ZADA Mine engaged in a critical conversation. Community members from Pumula, Cowdray Park, and Parklands shared firsthand accounts of how nearby mining activities had affected their homes and health. “The situation is alarming; the dust from mines within just a 5 km radius is affecting our kids’ health and disrupting community life,” said Celesile Ndlovu, a Pumula resident.



Images of duty bearers and Pumula residents watching Time Bomb, followed by a collaborative discussion on co-creating sustainable solutions to the challenges of urban mining

Attendees put forth clear proposals to address these issues, calling for a review of urban mining policies, a reconsideration of the city's master plan to better regulate mining zones, and stricter enforcement of mining regulations. There was also a strong push for a national dialogue to ensure that these concerns reach policymakers and parliamentarians who can advocate for climate-smart and environmentally friendly mining practices.

Following the success of the Bulawayo event, a subsequent screening was held in Harare, where the conversation expanded to include national stakeholders. The Mayor of Harare echoed similar sentiments to his Bulawayo counterpart, emphasizing the need for proper regulation and oversight to prevent urban mining from threatening city infrastructure and the well-being of residents. This second screening reinforced the urgency of integrating local voices into policymaking to ensure sustainable urban development.

The documentary's launch received widespread acclaim for its role in raising awareness and fostering community engagement. [Attendees lauded](#) Bulawayo's coordinated efforts to demand good governance in urban mining, aligning with the sentiments expressed by the city's leadership.

This initiative underscores ALZ's commitment to promoting accountability and empowering communities to actively participate in shaping policies that directly impact their environment and well-being. By bringing together diverse stakeholders, the documentary has catalyzed meaningful dialogue and action toward addressing the complexities of urban mining in Zimbabwe.



Celesile Ndlovu, a Pumula resident, shares the challenges caused by urban mining in Pumula and Bulawayo while proposing solutions during the Harare screening of the documentary.



ALZ Film Fellow, Sox the Poet, reflects on the impact of urban mining in Bulawayo, drawing from his lived experiences in Magwegwe, a suburb near Pumula. He shares how these realities inspired his poem [I Dare You](#), which serves as the soundtrack for the Time Bomb documentary, using activism to amplify the crisis and drive change

Advocacy and Policy



The cover of the AL policy note on Drug and Substance Abuse.

What research or analysis was conducted in 2024? Which advocacy campaigns stood out and what policy areas did your team work on? What outputs were created and what policy shifts are happening with our help?

POLICY BRIEF ON DRUGS AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

In November 2023, Accountability Lab Zimbabwe (ALZ) produced a policy brief on Drugs and Substance Abuse, analyzing the issue through a governance and accountability lens. This brief has since played a pivotal role in shaping policy debates in the legislature. In April 2024, the President [launched](#) the *Zimbabwe Multisectoral Drug and Substance Abuse Plan 2024-2030*, emphasizing good governance, improved coordination, and accountability in tackling the crisis, key themes highlighted in ALZ's policy note.

The policy brief was instrumental in escalating community concerns to policymakers, leading to increased dialogue on drug and substance abuse as a governance issue. Notably, the brief was referenced verbatim in the Senate to support a motion on the subject. Additionally, ALZ's advocacy efforts contributed to a significant increase in state funding for drug and substance abuse interventions. The 2024 national budget saw an increase from USD 1.8 million to USD 1.2 billion for these initiatives, surpassing the World Health Organization's (WHO) forecast of USD 124.5 million over the next two decades.

A critical focus of the 2024 budget is the construction of rehabilitation facilities to treat drug and substance abuse disorders. ALZ's policy brief had previously highlighted the severe inadequacy of existing infrastructure, which could accommodate only 5,000 individuals. The brief called for a human rights-based approach to addressing the crisis, a recommendation now reflected in the government's response. Through evidence-based advocacy, ALZ has successfully influenced policy shifts, ensuring that drug and substance abuse is treated not only as a social issue but also as a governance priority.

MUTAPA INVESTMENT FUND

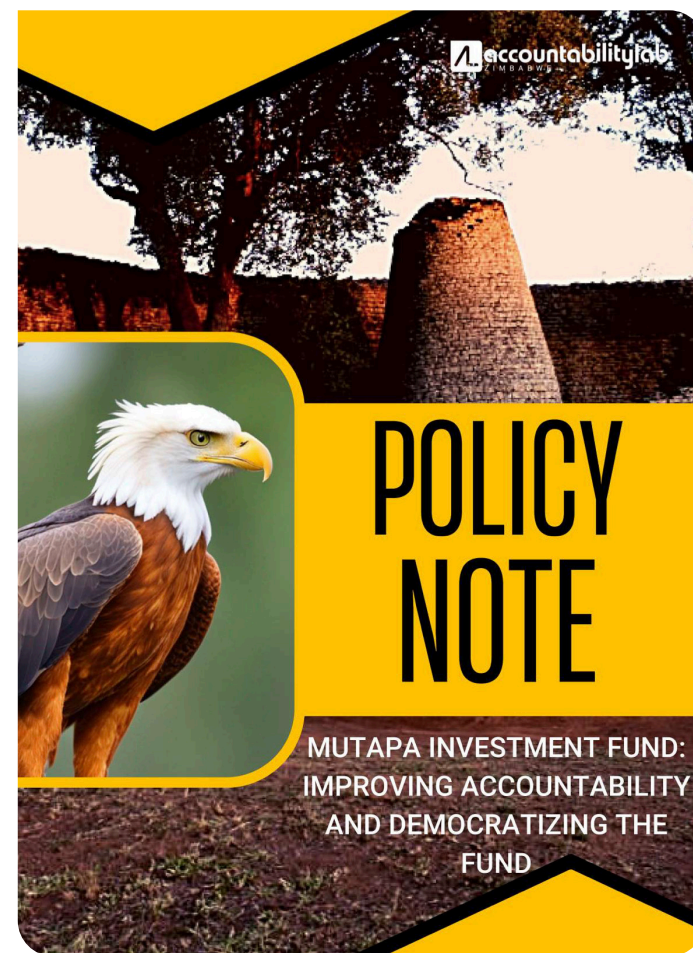
Our policy brief on the Mutapa Investment Fund continues to shape public discourse, gaining traction in mainstream media and policy circles. It has been cited by multiple newspapers, and several opinion pieces have been generated using our research, reinforcing its impact on governance discussions.

Recognizing the need for deeper engagement, Parliament of Zimbabwe (PoZ) requested a capacity-building workshop on this subject. As a result, ALZ facilitated a session with the Public Accounts, Budget, and Investment Committees to enhance their understanding and oversight of the Fund.

See: <https://medium.com/@mosesngozi1/youth-perspectives-on-zimbabwes-mutapa-investment-fund-red-flags-implications-for-the-fight-7dcfebd5dcdd> and <https://www.newsday.co.zw/theindependent/opinion/article/200030423/unpacking-the-mutapa-investment-fund-ii>



Parliamentarians who attended the capacity-building workshop on the Mutapa Investment Fund, equipping them with governance and oversight tools based on [ALZ MIF policy note](#).



The cover of the AL policy note on the MIF

PARKS AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT BILL

ALZ conducted a capacity-building workshop for the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Environment to enhance their understanding and engagement with the Parks and Wildlife Management Bill. The training equipped parliamentarians with the necessary fluency to debate the Bill effectively and contributed to the drafting of a compendium on the legislation.

This initiative showcased ALZ's ability to [convene and coordinate](#) diverse stakeholders by bringing together 20 parliamentarians, state institutions, and leading civic organizations in Kadoma. By fostering collaboration among experts with various skills and experiences, the workshop strengthened governance in parks and wildlife management, ensuring more informed legislative processes.

MANUAL CODIFICATION

ALZ have piloted AL100 with integrity icons and had positive feedback from the sessions and aim to ensure that these will become capacity-building tools beyond NNAZ and become part of our institutional knowledge.

ESTABLISHMENT AND STRENGTHENING OF RELATIONSHIPS IN THE ECOSYSTEM.

The Lab has established sound relationships with various committees of parliament and is now regarded as a partner in evidence-based capacity-building for various committees of parliament. debate competencies among parliamentarians on multiple issues.

BUILDING INFLUENCE AND ADVOCACY AROUND SOLID KNOWLEDGE AND EVIDENCE AT THE POLICY LEVEL

The impact of structured research in shaping discourse and influencing policy has been a key takeaway from our work. By translating CivActs findings into actionable insights, we have successfully amplified community concerns, using data-driven policy briefs and notes to inform Parliament, the executive branch, and service providers.

This process has reinforced the importance of [equipping parliamentarians](#) and policymakers with knowledge grounded in community issues, empirical research, and comparative analysis. High-quality, evidence-based research that withstands rigorous scrutiny not only strengthens policy debates but also enhances governance outcomes. As a result, our work has led to increased requests for capacity-building workshops, expert opinions, and technical support from various institutions.

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

Total annual budget

2 million

Total number
of grants

2

Total number
of staff

19

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