

EAST AND SOUTHERN AFRICA

# Annual Report

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# 2025

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# Director's Overview

**MCDONALD LEWANIKA, DIRECTOR  
ACCOUNTABILITY LAB EAST  
AND SOUTHERN AFRICA**

“There are years that ask questions and years that answer”

These were the words of Zora Neale Hurston in one of the chapters of her 1937 novel, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. 2025 posed serious questions for civil society. It disrupted many plans and indeed the entire ecosystem. It challenged our assertions about agility and tested our capacity to manage complexity. It threw numerous curveballs – shrinking civic space, funding uncertainty, democratic backsliding, rapid technological changes, and increasing pressure on civil society actors to do more with less.

We attempted to answer, but our responses were incomplete and occasionally incorrect. However, we remain hopeful that the future we envision – one in which resources are used wisely, decisions benefit everyone fairly, and people live secure lives – is still achievable despite the changing global order.

Throughout most of 2025, we focused on holding the line; sustaining relationships, keeping civic actors connected, strengthening the ecosystem, and ensuring that ideas, movements, and people working on accountability were neither isolated nor invisible. Survival required us to respond to the context, to seize opportunities as they arose, and to invest in platforms that protected a governance ecosystem under significant assault, so it could remain relevant and vibrant. Conferences and gatherings became spaces to exchange ideas and build strength to sustain work in inno-



vative ways that aligned with the evolving environment. We utilised both invited and self-created spaces to connect, root ourselves, and share solidarity. These forums enabled us to highlight African thought and experiences on issues related to digital governance, electoral accountability, climate justice, natural resource governance and public finance, while fortifying relationships that will sustain the work and progress beyond projects.

After two years of testing ideas, listening attentively, and adapting to real-world challenges, November 2025 marked a significant milestone for us as ALESA was officially

launched. The launch demonstrated the maturity of Accountability Lab's national labs and highlighted the urgent need for coordinated cross-border responses to shared governance and human rights issues. Operating across East and Southern Africa, ALESA's challenge is to enhance citizen-led governance and amplify critical voices in key policy spaces at the regional level, while remaining deeply connected to local realities.

The Citizens Action for Rights, Democracy and Accountability (CARD) initiative is ALESA's primary programmatic effort to enhance human rights and accountability across



the region. Building on longstanding relationships with community-based movements and a dedication to nurturing and promoting youth leadership, CARDA directly addresses intersecting pressures and institutional complexities in governance and human rights. Its incubators, initially centred on digital governance and climate justice, exemplify ALESA's commitment to supporting youth-led, innovative approaches that are practical, ethical, context-aware, and suitable for the digital age, yet aware of the constant threat that climate calamities pose for our world despite denials and deprioritisation by some of our major funders.

In a year that asked serious questions, ALESA chose action, and Accountability Lab broadly chose to adapt rather than

die. It chose connection and solidarity over isolation, learning over rigidity, and adaptability over fidelity to old methods and ways of working.

It's early days yet, but establishing ALESA formally reflects Accountability Lab's commitment to fostering a connected governance movement that understands lasting accountability is rooted in relationships, shared learning, and ongoing civic action.

The hope is that, after the thorough examination of 2025's questions, 2026 and subsequent years will be characterised by coherent, credible, and transparent answers, motivated by the need to make governance serve the people. As a new

network lab, part of ALESA's remit is to strengthen the impact of other Labs that have been affected by funding cuts, the war in DRC, changing donor priorities, and other factors – particularly in the DRC and South Africa – and to develop programming initiatives and partnerships that the Lab has initiated in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Malawi.

It may be too early to discuss impact, but as the rest of the report shows, ALESA is well on its way and will continue to build on the 2025 foundations, hopefully answering the questions that the year asked and responding to the challenges of our time.

## VISION AND MISSION

An Africa where resources are used wisely, decisions benefit everyone fairly, and people lead secure lives. It is a continent where citizens are empowered to exercise agency in governance, and leaders are responsible and responsive. Land institutions are accountable.

ALESA's mission is to make the African governance architecture work for people by supporting active citizens, responsible leaders, and accountable institutions.

## VALUES

### Learning

ALESA is committed to continuous learning as a core institutional practice. The organisation integrates reflection, documentation, and adaptive learning into programme design and implementation to improve effectiveness, respond to contextual changes, and strengthen impact over time.

### Equity

ALESA applies an equity-centred approach across its work by recognising and addressing power imbalances that affect participation and access to opportunities. The organisation intentionally designs programmes and platforms to enable meaningful inclusion, fair resource distribution, and representative participation, particularly for historically marginalised groups.

### Integrity

ALESA operates with integrity by aligning its actions with its mission, values, and commitments. The organisation prioritises ethical conduct, responsible stewardship of resources, and accountability in its engagements, ensuring consistency between stated intentions and practice.

### Solidarity

ALESA advances solidarity through collaborative engagement with young people, communities, and ecosystem partners. The organisation emphasises collective action, mutual support, and long-term partnerships, recognising that sustainable accountability outcomes are strengthened through cooperation and shared responsibility.

### Transparency

ALESA upholds transparency by maintaining open and clear communication in its decision-making, operational processes, and programme implementation. The organisation prioritises timely information sharing and clear articulation of roles, expectations, and outcomes to strengthen trust, accountability, and effective collaboration with stakeholders.

## PILLARS

### Ecosystem and Coalition Building

ALESA supports vital and emerging elements of the accountability ecosystem in East and Southern Africa. It promotes the growth of young civil society leaders and social entrepreneurs with innovative solutions to governance issues at both national and local levels through its incubators and movement-support initiatives. ALESA aids in implementing AL Global initiatives to develop and reinforce the ecosystem via the Civic Strength Partners and Wayfinder programmes. It is creating a multisectoral, geographically diverse coalition of activists, researchers, creatives, and practitioners across its five key focus areas: Natural Resource Governance, Climate Justice, Digital Governance, Electoral Accountability, and Human Rights.

### Learning Pipelines and Coalitions

ALESA develops learning coalitions to promote continuous learning and agility among CSOs in the governance sector across East and Southern Africa, focusing on Human Rights, Natural Resource Governance, Democratisation, Climate Justice, Electoral Accountability, and Digital Governance. ALESA is well positioned as a learning partner and has previously served by convening the Partners Learning eXchange Dialogues (PLxD) for BHP Foundation's NRG partners and facilitating the Community Smart Ownership and Consent Project's – The Resource Exchange. It offers coaching and facilitation for committed members of the accountability and governance ecosystem throughout East and Southern Africa and beyond, aiming to foster ongoing learning beyond events and sustain progress beyond projects.

### Convening and Platforming

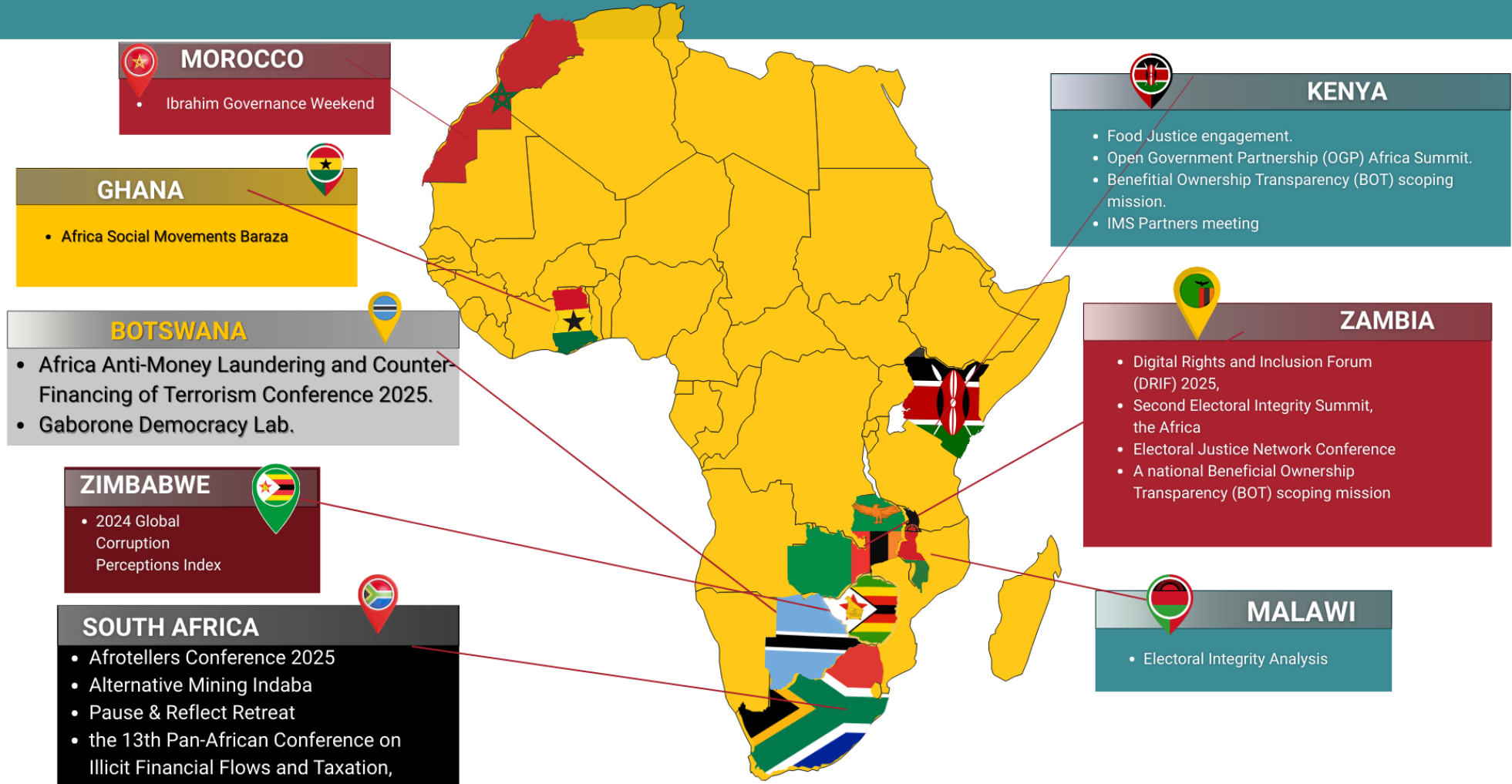
ALESA creates spaces for critical reflection on governance, human rights, and accountability processes, bringing together a diverse range of participants from the governance and accountability sector to discuss vital issues affecting the sector. In partnership with other organisations, ALESA was the main organiser of the Citizens' Summit in Defence of Democracy, held ahead of the Democracy Summit in Lusaka, Zambia, in 2023, as well as subsequent Global Democracy Coalition Africa Forums on Democracy in Ghana and Nairobi. ALESA supports and platforms important national voices in discussions at key policy centres on accountability and human rights through travel grants, speaking opportunities, and participation. It has also facilitated giving young people a voice at key forums such as the Open Government Partnership, various Communities of Practice, and Human Rights Defenders summits.

### Thought Leadership, Knowledge and Creative Narratives

ALESA shifts narratives and expands civic imagination by producing and amplifying African ideas on democracy, accountability, and human rights through both authoritative knowledge and creative civic storytelling. This pillar holds ALESA's thought leadership platforms (including issue-focused think tanks), applied research and writing by Africa's public intellectuals, and dissemination through print, broadcast, and ALESA's own channels (including the Accountability Journal and flagship talk/podcast series). It also houses ALESA's Arts4change approach supporting activism, popular education, and relatable narrative framing through poetry, film, multimedia storytelling, and digital campaigns. These strategies challenge deficit-based portrayals and make governance issues accessible, emotionally resonant, and mobilising well beyond traditional policy circles.

# Strengthening People-Centred Governance

## ALESA's ENGAGEMENT FOOTPRINT IN 2025



## PROXIMATE SOLUTIONS FOR INCLUSIVE AND ACCOUNTABLE INSTITUTIONS

ALESA's human-centred approaches to programming ensured that as much as possible, the work was centred on the needs and aspirations of the people it serves. Part of this effort entailed participating in and staging key panels at major movement convenings and ensuring that governance, rights, and accountability conversations were accessible, relevant, and rooted in the lived experiences of people across East and Southern Africa.

### Progress Towards Results

#### 1. Connecting with social and people's movements across a range of issues. Illustrative activities included:

1. February - Activities at the Alternative Mining Indaba in South Africa,
2. February - Regional conferences on democratic resilience and movement building in Malawi
3. March - Platforming youth voices at the [Open Government Partnership Africa Summit](#) in Kenya,
4. March - One-day workshop in Nairobi on aid cuts and funding futures for over 15 Youth Organisations and partners of the Ford Foundation East Africa, Youth Democracy Cohort, and ALESA.
5. April - Engaging social movements and movement support organisations at the Trust Africa convened [Africa Social Movements Baraza](#) in Ghana,
6. October – attending the South-South Movements



Convergence in Cape Town, South Africa, convened by Yiaga Africa and Open Societies Foundations (OSF).

7. October - Participation at the inaugural Gaborone Democracy Labs convened by Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung.
8. Participation in the [13th Pan-African Conference on Illicit Financial Flows](#) in South Africa convened by the Tax justice network.
9. Provided demand-driven material and financial solidarity to 13 organisations in Southern Africa. These included Youth initiatives, Student movements, national associations, and corruption watchdogs. Grants between USD500 and USD5000 were given to support specific projects by the organisations.

Across these spaces, ALESA deepened its contribution to continental and regional governance discourse by consistently foregrounding citizen-centred accountability, resource justice, and civic space sustainability. Through meaningful engagement with social and people's movements, ALESA provided analytical insights, strengthened movement infrastructure, amplified youth and grassroots voices, and translated dialogue into practical solidarity. This approach ensured that convenings moved beyond exchange to action, reinforcing ALESA's commitment to people-led governance and accountable institutions rooted in lived experience across East and Southern Africa.



**2. Making Accountability Conversations Accessible and Participatory:** ALESA engaged multiple media forms and methods to lead thought while making governance, rights, and accountability conversations legible and easy to digest for the region's ordinary citizens and young people. Through targeted social media engagement, podcasts, webinars, and traditional media, ALESA reached tens of thousands of citizens, civil society actors, and regional stakeholders. Highlights include over 16,000 interactions on Facebook and more than 1.2 million views. This included interviews and debates on:

- Gabs FM Botswana [Democracy Focus](#) on the role of transparency and Accountability in strengthening democracy, [Classic 263](#), on the link between Human Rights and Accountability, Prime TV Zambia on Beneficial Ownership Transparency, The Leaders Talk Africa, on Uncovering Procurement Corruption and Money Laundering in Africa's Public Sector, [Citizen Voices Network on democratic prospects](#) and the political state of play in Zimbabwe and Conversations on [African Philanthropy](#) amongst others.
- ALESA established a Regional Media Community of

Practice that fostered collaboration between 17 journalists across East and Southern Africa, strengthening cross-border dialogue and narrative-building in civic accountability and climate justice. This community completes ALESA's digital reach through a ready connection with print and television media, as well as bloggers.

Through the above engagements and others, ALESA translated complex issues such as [electoral integrity](#), political financing, public finance management, and human rights into accessible language and interactive formats. These engagements enabled citizens to better understand how decisions made by those in power affect their daily lives and how they can question, influence, and participate in those decisions. By meeting people where they already are, on airwaves, digital platforms, and community-facing spaces, ALESA positioned citizens as active contributors rather than passive recipients of governance discourse.

**3. Embedding civic education in lived experience:** ALESA treated civic education as a lived, ongoing practice.

- Key moments, such as the commemoration of [International Human Rights Day](#), were intentionally used as practical learning [spaces](#) to deepen public understanding of rights, responsibilities, and democratic participation. These engagements reinforced the idea that accountability is an everyday responsibility and encouraged citizens to see themselves as legitimate actors in defending and advancing rights. Across diverse national contexts, this approach contributed to growing civic confidence and collective agency, particularly among young people navigating constrained civic spaces.
- At the [2nd Africa Civil Society Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism AML/CFT Conference 2025](#) in Botswana, [ALESA led a masterclass](#) focused on procurement corruption, illicit financial flows, and whistleblower protection. This engagement brought together policymakers, financial crime experts, and civil society leaders to examine practical tools for strengthening transparency in public finance management.

**4. Convening and platforming youth and creative narrative framing:**

Recognising that lived experience is a powerful form of accountability knowledge, ALESA invested in creative and narrative-based approaches that amplified citizen voices.

- At the Afrotellers Conference, [ALESA platformed artists, storytellers, and activists](#) to surface personal experiences of injustice, exclusion, and resilience. This was achieved through co-hosting and actively shaping the conference using creative storytelling to advance people-centred governance through:
  - facilitating key sessions like the opening plenary on Our Stories, Our Voices, Our Power,
  - moderating the photography exhibition on “Stories from kwaGogo Ntuli”,
  - and platforming Arts4Change alumni and Accountapreneurs through performances, fireside chats on “Artivism for People-Centred Governance”, and exhibitions.

ALESA demonstrated how art, narrative, and lived experience can serve as powerful tools for accountability. It connected individual narratives to broader governance and accountability debates, shifting accountability from abstract policy language to human-centred stories that resonate across communities and borders. This work demonstrated how creative expression can strengthen citizen participation and enrich regional accountability ecosystems.





**5. Extending proximity through ecosystem and coalition building:**

ALESA used most of the abovementioned efforts to work with a range of representative bodies and regional platforms that carry the voices of citizens, movements, and civil society into national and continental governance spaces. In addition to those already listed:

- ALESA connected with organisations working on elections through the Africa [Electoral Justice Network](#), which convened Supreme and High Court Judges, electoral bodies, and civil society in Livingstone, Zambia, to strengthen electoral integrity across the continent.
- ALESA also collaborated with sectoral and issue-based coalitions, such as Open Ownership, to enhance beneficial ownership transparency efforts in Zambia and Kenya. This involved engaging regulators, civil society organisations, faith-based bodies, youth groups, and research institutions to promote transparency and accountability in public finance. Through these representative bodies and networks, ALESA ensured that grassroots experiences and citizen perspectives informed regional policy discussions,

thereby strengthening connections between policies and the communities they serve.

- Participation and hosting panels at the Africa Electoral Integrity Summit in Lusaka, Zambia in October 2026. At the conference hosted by AfEONet and the AHEAD Africa consortium, ALESA led the “*Rethinking the future of democracy support*” panel, with panellists from International IDEA, UNDP, Open Society Foundations, NDI, and the European Platform for Democratic Elections.

**6. Programmatic co-creation & incubator launch:** Through a Collaborative Planning Lab, program alumni and ALESA conceptualised two thematic incubators focused on [Climate Justice and Digital Governance](#). Alumni offered critical insights on participant selection, curriculum design, mentorship, peer learning, and post-incubator support, drawing on their own experiences to enhance the programmes. This approach ensured that incubators remained relevant, accessible, and capable of creating meaningful impact. The incubators – launched in November 2025 – focus on two

key areas for regional civic leadership; using technology to improve transparency, inclusion, and citizen participation, and empowering young leaders to promote equitable climate action and resilience. Through practical projects, mentorship, and network-building, the incubators turn ALESA’s vision of participatory, locally rooted leadership into tangible, systemic change. The incubators attracted 400 applicants from Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Uganda, Kenya, Malawi, and Zambia.

**7. Sustaining regional collaboration and network density:** As a regional Network Lab, ALESA provides an enduring platform for citizen-led governance and accountability initiatives across Botswana, Kenya, Malawi, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. By linking alumni expertise, cross-sector collaboration, and participatory programs, ALESA cultivates a vibrant ecosystem of civic innovators capable of advancing accountable, inclusive, and sustainable change across the region.



**BRIDGING CITIZEN VOICES AND POLICY**

ALESA positioned itself as a strategic convener, moderator, and knowledge broker across governance, public finance, digital rights, climate justice, and electoral integrity spaces in East and Southern Africa. Proximity to power, in this context, refers to deliberate and sustained engagement with policy-makers, regulators, judicial actors, civil society networks, and regional platforms to ensure that citizen perspectives – particularly those of youth and women – shape policy debates and reform processes. This result area reflects ALESA’s role as a regional lab – connecting grassroots insights to national, regional, and continental decision-making spaces in a coherent and influence-oriented manner.

**Towards influencing governance, digital rights, electoral integrity, and anti-corruption reforms**

**1. Convening reform actors around Beneficial Ownership Transparency:** ALESA advanced conversations around Beneficial Ownership Transparency (BOT) reforms in Zambia and Kenya through multi-stakeholder scoping missions, in partnership with Open Ownership and the End Snow Washing Coalition. This led to increased CSO understanding of legal and technical BOT provisions, strengthened civil society and media literacy, practical engagement strategies at the grassroots level, and improved coordination between government agencies and non-state actors. These efforts position ALESA and its partners to support evidence-based advocacy and build multi-stakeholder collaboration. It also created practical pathways linking BOT data to procurement integrity, anti-corruption outcomes, and citizen-driven accountability, laying a foundation for tangible governance reforms in both Zambia and Kenya.





**2. Shaping digital governance through African ethical frameworks:** At the Paradigm Initiative’s Digital Rights and Inclusion Forum (DRIF) 25 in Zambia, ALESA hosted a dedicated session on Ubuntu and AI governance – advancing inclusive, culturally grounded approaches to artificial intelligence policy. The session convened digital rights actors, technologists, civil society leaders, and policymakers to interrogate how emerging technologies can be governed in ways that centre community participation, equity, and collective accountability. By positioning African ethical principles within global AI debates, ALESA ensured that digital governance conversations remain rooted in lived realities and rights-based frameworks.

**3. Strengthening electoral integrity and democratic confidence:** Through participation and moderation roles at Zambia’s Electoral Integrity Summit and the [Africa Electoral Justice Network Conference](#), ALESA advanced discussions on financing democracy and on building public confidence in electoral dispute-resolution mechanisms. By engaging electoral actors, judicial stakeholders, and civil society coalitions, ALESA contributed to conversations on restoring trust in electoral systems and protecting civic participation in a shifting global democratic landscape.

**4. Engaging regional and continental governance platforms:** In October 2025, the ALESA Executive Director was nominated

to sit on the Interim Steering Committee of the African Union Advisory Body on Corruption, Non-state Actors Forum. This places it near the continental policy-making body, enabling it to influence country efforts to observe anti-corruption commitments across Africa. Additionally, through strategic partnerships with anti-corruption watchdogs like the Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission, and through deliberate convenings, strategic participation, and thought leadership across regional and continental platforms, ALESA connected local accountability insights to policy debates, elevated youth and civil society perspectives in high-level forums, and promoted cross-sector collaboration on digital governance, public finance, natural resource oversight, and electoral integrity.

# Cultivating Connection in the Civic Ecosystem



ALESA strengthened its role as a regional ecosystem builder by intentionally creating durable platforms that connect young innovators, civic leaders, social movements, creatives, media actors, and communities with knowledge, mentorship, resources, and regional networks. Ecosystem building, in ALESA's approach, moved beyond ad hoc collaboration to sustained peer learning, co-creation, and solidarity across borders and sectors. Through regional convenings, learning pipelines, media communities of practice, coalition engagement, and co-created incubators on Climate Justice and Digital Governance, ALESA nurtured an interconnected civic ecosystem rooted in lived experience and practical action. These platforms enabled actors to exchange knowledge, align strategies, access material and financial solidarity, and collectively respond to shared governance, accountability,

and rights challenges, strengthening both individual capacities and the resilience of the broader civic space in East and Southern Africa.

## PROXIMITY TO PEOPLE AND POWER

Building on this ecosystem foundation, ALESA advanced proximity to people and power in a coherent and mutually reinforcing manner, delivering against its pillars of Learning Pipelines and Coalitions, Convening and Platforming, and Thought Leadership, Knowledge, and Creative Narratives. By remaining close to citizens, movements, youth, and creatives, ALESA ensured that governance and accountability conversations were accessible, participatory, and grounded in lived realities. Simultaneously, by engaging policymakers, regula-

tors, judicial actors, and regional and continental platforms, ALESA translated grassroots insights into policy-relevant dialogue and reform-oriented spaces. Through learning pipelines that connected community actors to continental debates, convenings that moved dialogue toward action, and thought leadership that blended rigorous analysis with human-centred and creative narratives, ALESA bridged the distance between people and power. This integrated approach strengthened civic confidence, amplified under-represented voices, influenced regional governance discourse, and consolidated ALESA's position as a trusted regional lab advancing accountable, inclusive, and people-centred governance across East and Southern Africa.

# Shifting Narratives



## ALESA MEDIA AND DIGITAL IMPACT

Data from January- December 2025

### DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT

Engagement was on ALZ and ALESA social media platforms from January to November 2025 in November to December respectively.

Facebook	LinkedIn	X	Centre for Innovation and Technology (CITE) ASAKHE X-SPACES
<b>16,368</b> Engagement	<b>2,447</b> Impressions	<b>+ 5,000</b> Reach	<b>3,369</b> Tuned in

### REGIONAL & CONTINENTAL HIGHLIGHTS

CITIZEN VOICES NETWORK <b>15,000</b> views <i>Zim's Political Landscape 2028 Elections</i>	LEADERS TALK WEBINAR <b>+500</b> views <i>Anti-corruption in Africa</i>	African Election Observers Network (AfEONet) livestream <b>547</b> views <i>Electoral Integrity</i>
CONVERSATION ON AFRICAN PHILANTHROPY PODCAST <b>780</b> subscribers <i>Rethinking non-profit Resilience</i>		

### NATIONAL MEDIA IMPACT

PRIME TV ZAMBIA <b>1.2M</b> VIEWS <i>On Beneficiary Ownership Transparency</i>	CLASSIC 263 ZIMBABWE <b>10, 000</b> LISTENERS <i>Accountability and Human Rights</i>	GABZ FM BOTSWANA <b>+1, 000</b> LISTENERS <i>Transparency &amp; Accountability in strengthening democracy,</i>
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### MEDIA COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE



**MEET THE 2026 DIGITAL GOVERNANCE ACCOUNTABILITY ENTREPRENEURS (ACCOUNTAPRENUERS)**

 <p><b>WISDOM BALICHOLO   21</b> <b>ACCESS PAL</b> Assistive tech for the visually impaired</p>	 <p><b>RACHEAL NCUBE   29</b> <b>DIGITAL HAVEN</b> Digital Rights &amp; Online Safety (Women)</p>	 <p><b>MUNASHE MASUYIWA   24</b> <b>YOUTH ACCOUNTABILITY INITIATIVE</b> AI &amp; DATA FOR BUDGET MONITORING</p>	 <p><b>TATENDA E. MUWOMOI   32</b> <b>ON-BOARDVEHICLE WEIGHING SYSTEM</b> Truck safety &amp; Anti-Corruption</p>
 <p><b>KOHNEMIE M'META   25</b> <b>MZINDA OPEN GOV</b> Track budgets via WhatsApp &amp; SMS</p>	 <p><b>HOPE SONJERA   26</b> <b>MZIKA HUB</b> Public Services App</p>	 <p><b>PRAISE KAGOYA   29</b> <b>OKA NEXUS</b> Rural digital hub to eradicate digital divide (Access to data &amp; gadgets)</p>	 <p><b>CHIMWEMWE KASAKULA   30</b> <b>DIGITAL DEMOCRACY WATCH</b> Election &amp; Disinformation Control</p>
 <p><b>MNTHAMBALA DEMISE   31</b> <b>GOV VOICE</b> Anonymous Service Feedback</p>	 <p><b>DERICK J. AMBROSE   21</b> <b>SKONGA PACKAGE PROJECT</b> Anonymous Service Feedback</p>	 <p><b>MONICA PATRICK   25</b> <b>HER DIGITAL VOICE</b> Empowering rural girls</p>	 <p><b>ROBERT MAJIGE   28</b> <b>CIVIC LENS TANZANIA</b> Citizen reporting platform</p>

**MEET THE 2026 CLIMATE JUSTICE ACCOUNTABILITY ENTREPRENEURS (ACCOUNTAPRENUERS)**

 <p><b>BEAUTUS MSAMANGE   26</b> <b>KARONGA CLIMATE STORYTELLING HUB</b> Community-led climate storytelling platform</p>	 <p><b>SUSAN CHISI   25</b> <b>GREEN HER PATH</b> Women-led climate resilience farming</p>	 <p><b>ALEX OGWAL   28</b> <b>SILENT SIGNALS</b> Climate alerts for Deaf communities</p>	 <p><b>RESTY MBWALI   26</b> <b>VOICES OF RESILIENCE - KARAMOJA</b> Girls-led climate justice circles</p>
 <p><b>SHARON MUZAKI   30</b> <b>LOCALISING CLIMATE</b> Strengthening climate journalism capacity</p>	 <p><b>MODESTER NANYUNGA   27</b> <b>BLUERROOTS RESILIENCE</b> Indigenous coastal climate adaptation</p>	 <p><b>KUDZAI ZHUWAKI   24</b> <b>WASTEXCHANGE</b> Waste-to-value circular economy</p>	 <p><b>SIBONGUMUSA NCUBE   26</b> <b>CLIMATE COURTS</b> Indigenous climate justice education</p>
 <p><b>HUBERT SENGA   27</b> <b>VUJANA WAKIMBIZI NA MAZINGIRA</b> Refugee youth climate resilience</p>	 <p><b>KHADIJA JILO   29</b> <b>JURE CULTURE AND TALES</b> Cultural heritage for environmental protection</p>		

Accountability Lab East and Southern Africa (ALESA) is supporting youth civic leaders across East and Southern Africa through the 2026 Climate Justice Incubator and Digital Governance Incubator to address interconnected challenges of climate change, digital exclusion, and governance systems that often fail to reflect people’s lived realities. Implemented throughout 2026, the incubators bring together Accountability Entrepreneurs developing locally grounded initiatives that strengthen transparency, inclusion, and citizen participation in climate justice and digital governance. This work responds to the disproportionate impact of these challenges on young people and marginalised communities, where limited access to information, public services, and democratic participation remains a persistent barrier. Donations in support of ALESA’s 2026 Accountability Incubators enable these youth civic leaders to strengthen their initiatives, build operational and digital capacity, and expand their reach to more communities, contributing to the sustainability and growth of people-centred accountability solutions across the region.

# Micro Interviews

## **Tatenda Everjoy Muwomo** **WasteXchange founder | Zimbabwe**

One key change I have observed in my area is increased attention to road safety and infrastructure protection, particularly around overloaded heavy vehicles damaging public roads. Through advocacy discussions within technical and transport spaces, there is growing awareness of the need for better monitoring and enforcement systems. A critical challenge that needs urgent attention is weak enforcement of vehicle load regulations, which leads to road damage, accidents, and public resource loss. Through my technical background and engagement in accountability conversations, I have contributed by promoting the importance of on-board weighing systems as a preventive and transparent solution. My advice to others strengthening governance is to combine practical innovation with accountability to create sustainable and enforceable solutions.

## **Khadija Jilo | Advocate for Inclusive Cultural Tourism | Kenya**

Mombasa is the second largest city in Kenya after Nairobi, and is home to diverse communities. When having Trade expos or events, we always find the same people showcasing modern tourism, yet we have diverse communities and entrepreneurs offering unique heritage tourism, such as the indigenous communities and the refugees from different countries, which not only symbolises inclusion but also recognition and appreciation of diversity.

Strengthening governance isn't as easy as it may sound. It requires courage, consistency and a lot of pushing. Every joint effort counts and, even small increments of progress are a positive result

People should strive to seek information and knowledge. Most governance and accountability issues come as a result of leniency in enforcement and monitoring, and a lack of information.

## **Susan Salome Chisi** **Green Her Path founder | Malawi**

A key change I have observed in governance and accountability is the increased inclusion of women-led organizations in government consultations on disaster-risk response, creating space to identify gaps and recommend improvements. Through our advocacy work at Girls on the Lead, we have influenced district-level discussions to meaningfully include women's voices in disaster-preparedness planning, helping to ensure that community realities inform decision-making. However, a major challenge that still requires urgent attention is the weak implementation of gender-responsive accountability frameworks, which often results in women's priorities being underfunded or overlooked. My participation in advocacy and coordination platforms has helped bridge the gap between community women and decision-makers, ensuring that grassroots concerns shape government actions. My advice is simple: continue advocating for inclusive governance, because lasting change begins when every voice—especially those of women and girls—has a real influence on policy decisions.

### **Eseru Abels | Alliance for Finance Monitoring (ACFIM) Programme Officer| UGANDA**

One significant change I have witnessed in governance and accountability is the reform of campus politics in Uganda, particularly the revision of student guild electoral frameworks to curb the commercialization of student elections. In 2018, through ACFIM's engagements with student leaders from Kyambogo University, Makerere University, Makerere University Business School, Kampala International University, and Uganda Christian University, long-standing concerns around vote buying, excessive campaign spending, and electoral malpractice were openly discussed and translated into concrete reform proposals.

A key outcome of these advocacy efforts was the publication of revised Guild Election Regulations at Makerere University under General Notice No. 39 of 2019 in the Uganda Gazette. The reforms introduced strict limits on campaign activities, including banning rallies in halls of residence, capping candidates to four rallies, criminalizing bribery and hooliganism, and clarifying nomination and campaign guidelines. Similar measures were later adopted at Kyambogo University, strengthening accountability, electoral integrity, and democratic participation within campus politics in Uganda.

### **Chimwemwe Kasakula | Digital Democracy Watch founder Malawi**

One significant change I have observed in governance and accountability in my country is the growing recognition of digital spaces as critical arenas for democratic participation. Civil society organisations are increasingly working collectively to promote transparency, protect digital rights, and safeguard electoral integrity, resulting in stronger and more coordinated advocacy platforms. A concrete outcome of these efforts has been improved collaboration between CSOs, media actors, and digital rights activists to monitor online political narratives during sensitive periods such as elections. Through my work in the digital rights space, I have contributed to strengthening these collaborations by supporting structured monitoring initiatives, facilitating dialogue among diverse stakeholders, and intentionally creating pathways for young people to meaningfully participate in digital accountability and monitoring processes. Despite this progress, a pressing challenge remains the absence of coordinated digital accountability frameworks that can effectively address online manipulation while safeguarding freedom of expression. My work continues to influence this space through sustained collaboration focused on producing evidence-based analysis and advancing youth inclusion in governance conversations. Going forward, my advice is that greater emphasis should be placed on below-the-line advocacy approaches that engage communities directly and translate policy commitments into practical, locally grounded action.

# Our People and Governance



**McDonald Lewanika**  
Executive Director



**Honest Rugadza**  
Senior Finance Officer



**Bathabile Dlamini**  
Media and Communications Officer



**Zibusiso Dube**  
Programs Officer, Translocal Network



**Rehema Patricks**  
Digital Governance Programs Associate



**Natalie Gwatorisa**  
Climate Justice Programs Associate



**Clemence Matare**  
Finance Assistant



**Annah Matsika**  
Senior Learning Fellow

## BOARD MEMBER NAMES AND NEW APPOINTMENTS

**Karin Alexander**  
**Jean Scrimgeour**  
**McDonald Lewanika**  
**Sheena Adams**

# Supporters



# Financials

PROJECT	IMS-CARDA	FORD-CJ	OO-AE	TOTAL
Staff Costs	88,666.67	67,216.25	-	155,882.92
Program Costs	144,267.21	31,233.85	45,867.52	221,368.58
Overheads	20,210.17	29,443.56	7,133.00	56,786.73
<b>ESTIMATED COSTS</b>	<b>253,144.04</b>	<b>127,893.67</b>	<b>53,000.52</b>	<b>434,038.23</b>