

ACCOUNTABILITY LAB GLOBAL

Document 04: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

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1. Our position

Accountability Lab exists to shift power towards people who usually do not have it. An organisation that does not practise that internally cannot credibly ask it of anyone else.

We work across a translocal network of separately registered organisations in Nepal, Pakistan, Liberia, Nigeria, Mali, South Africa and Zimbabwe, alongside AL Global in the United States. Our people come from very different legal systems, cultures and histories of exclusion. A single American definition of diversity would not fit. What follows is the common floor. Each entity may go further.

2. Who this applies to

AL Global’s structure means this policy has three tiers of application. They are not the same and should not be blurred.

Tier 1: applies directly and in full, with no equivalence test and no opt-out.

- Employees of AL Global, full time, part time, temporary and probationary
- **Employees of Model A fiscally sponsored projects and EOR clients.** AL Global is a fiscal host. Under Model A, comprehensive fiscal sponsorship, the project is legally part of AL and its staff are AL Global employees. They are covered by this policy in exactly the same way as anyone in the AL Global office, and their client organisation cannot substitute its own policy
- Members of the AL Global Board of Directors
- Fellows, interns and volunteers
- Consultants, contractors and their personnel while engaged on AL work
- Secondees and anyone else representing AL

Tier 2: applies by agreement, with an equivalence carve-out.

Model C fiscally sponsored clients, where the client is a separate legal entity receiving a pre-approved grant from AL. This policy flows down through the grant agreement, unless the client has its own policy of equal or higher standard. Equivalence is assessed and recorded at onboarding by the responsible AL role named below, and reviewed annually. It is not assumed.

Tier 3: applies by collective adoption, not by AL Global instruction.

Network Labs in the translocal network, currently Nepal, Pakistan, Liberia, Nigeria, Mali, South Africa and Zimbabwe. These are autonomous, separately governed organisations and AL Global is one participating lab among them. Under the Governance Compact, AL Global has no authority to direct them. Network-wide standards are adopted through the Network Council. Each Lab is invited to adopt this policy or one meeting its standards. Where a Lab's own law sets a higher standard, the higher standard applies.

Equivalence for this policy is assessed by the Co-CEO, Innovation and Operations and recorded in the client file.

One point specific to this policy. Because Model A project staff are AL Global employees, their pay, recruitment, promotion and adjustment decisions are AL's decisions. The measurement in section 8 must therefore cover them. Reporting on the diversity of a 15 person office while AL legally employs several times that number would not be an honest account.

It covers recruitment, pay, promotion, assessment, training, allocation of work and opportunity, discipline, dismissal, and how people treat each other day to day. It also covers who we select for fellowships and programmes, who we partner with, and whose voices appear in our work.

3. What we do not discriminate on

AL does not discriminate, and does not permit harassment, on the basis of:

Race, colour, ethnicity, ethnic or national origin, nationality, immigration status, caste, tribe or clan, indigenous identity, language, religion or belief or absence of belief, sex, pregnancy or maternity, breastfeeding, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital, civil partnership or family status, age, disability, neurodivergence, mental or physical health status including HIV status, genetic information, socioeconomic background, care experience, criminal record where unrelated to the role, or political opinion.

Three notes on this:

It is longer than the US legal minimum on purpose. Caste, tribe, language, indigenous identity, HIV status and socioeconomic background are live grounds of exclusion in the countries where our network works, and several are not protected by US federal law.

Political opinion is included deliberately, with a limit. AL staff are entitled to their own political views. What AL does require is that no one's work compromises AL's

independence or a partner's safety. Where someone's political activity creates a conflict, it is managed under the Conflict of Interest Policy, not treated as a discrimination question.

Where local law protects more, local law wins. South Africa's constitutional and employment equity framework, for example, protects on grounds and in ways US law does not. Where a country's law gives stronger protection than this policy, that law applies. Where it gives less, this policy applies. Where local law actively criminalises a characteristic on this list, most obviously sexual orientation and gender identity in several countries where our network works, AL will not use that law as a reason to discriminate, and will take advice on how to protect the person concerned rather than exposing them.

4. What we commit to

- **Recruit on ability.** Job requirements reflect what the role actually needs. We do not require degrees, unpaid experience, or fluency in unaccented English where they are not needed to do the work. We advertise openly, and we use structured, consistent questions for every candidate for a role.
- **Pay fairly and transparently.** Pay is set against a role, not against what a candidate previously earned or is willing to accept. AL Global publishes salary ranges in job adverts. We review pay across the organisation at least every two years for unexplained gaps by sex, race and location.
- **Take localisation seriously in our own hiring.** For an organisation that argues for shifting power, senior roles concentrated in one country would be a contradiction. We track where decision making authority sits, not just where headcount sits.
- **Make adjustments.** Anyone who needs an adjustment to do their job or to take part in a process, including for disability, health, caring responsibilities, religious observance, neurodivergence or language, can ask for one and will get a decision within 10 working days. We do not require a medical diagnosis for a reasonable adjustment.
- **Work across time zones and languages honestly.** Meetings are not routinely scheduled to suit one region. Key documents, including this one, the Code of Conduct and the Speak Up Policy, are made available in the working languages of our staff. If we cannot afford full translation, we say so and prioritise the policies that protect people.
- **Equalise parental leave.** AL Global provides the same paid parental leave entitlement to all new parents regardless of sex, gender, or whether they gave birth, adopted or became a parent through surrogacy. The specific entitlement sits in the Employee Handbook, not here.
- **Do not tolerate harassment or bullying.** Handled under the Code of Conduct and the Speak Up Policy.

- **Develop everyone.** Training, stretch assignments, conference attendance, authorship credit and external speaking opportunities are allocated openly, not by proximity to senior staff. We track who gets them.
- **Represent people accurately.** In our publications, photographs, case studies and events we do not use people's images or stories in ways that reduce them to victims, and we credit contributors by name where it is safe to do so.
- **Include people in decisions about them.** Programme participants and community monitors have a route to tell us when our work is excluding or harming them. See the Speak Up Policy, Track D.

5. What is expected of everyone

- Treat colleagues, participants and partners with respect.
- Do not use slurs, mockery, stereotypes or "banter" that targets any characteristic in section 3, including as a joke.
- Speak up if you see exclusion or harassment, including if it is directed at someone else and they have not complained.
- If you are a manager, notice who is in the room and who is not, and do something about it.

6. What is expected of managers

- Apply this policy in every hiring, pay, promotion, assessment and allocation decision, and be able to explain the basis for each.
- Act on concerns immediately. Knowingly allowing discrimination or harassment to continue, or failing to report it, is itself a breach of the Code of Conduct.
- Do not retaliate, and do not let others retaliate, against someone who raises an equality concern.

7. How to raise a concern

Under the Speak Up Policy, Track B covers discrimination, harassment and bullying. You can go to your manager, the Co-CEO, Innovation and Operations, the Global Safeguarding Lead, the AL Global Board Speak Up Lead, or the Chair of the Board. You do not have to start with your line manager. AL does not currently have an independent external reporting channel.

You also have the right to go to an external body, including the US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission or the equivalent authority where you work, at any time, without telling AL first.

8. How we know if this is working

Good intentions are not evidence. The Co-CEO, Innovation and Operations reports to the Governance Committee, and through it to the Board, every two years on:

- Composition of staff, senior management and the Board, by the categories we can lawfully and safely collect, and by location, **including staff of Model A fiscally sponsored projects and EOR clients**
- Where decision making authority and budget authority sit geographically
- Pay ranges and any unexplained gaps
- Applicant, shortlist and appointment numbers by stage, to show where people drop out
- Discrimination and harassment concerns raised, and what happened to them
- Adjustment requests made, and how many were granted
- Retention and exit reasons, where people are willing to share them

Collecting data on race, ethnicity, sexuality, religion or health is lawful in some of the places we work, unlawful in others, and dangerous to the individual in a few. We collect what is safe and lawful in each location, on a voluntary and anonymous basis, and we record where we could not collect and why. We do not pretend the resulting picture is complete.

9. Review

Reviewed by the Board every two years, or sooner if the law changes or the reporting in section 8 shows a problem.