

Accountability Lab South Africa Organizational Strategy 2019

Background	1
The Challenges	1
Theory of Change	3
Our Approach	3
AL South Africa 2019 Programming	3
Looking Towards 2020	6
What Does Success Look Like?	6
Our Structure	7
What Do We Mean by Learning?	8
Living By Our Principles	8
Feedback and Contacts	8

Background

The [Accountability Lab](#) is building a new generation of active citizens and responsible leaders around the world. We support change-makers to develop and implement positive ideas for integrity in their communities. By enabling people to use information and knowledge to build accountability, we unleash positive social and economic change.

This strategy has grown out of almost seven years of experience on the ground in West Africa and South Asia; numerous conversations with other organizations and individuals working in this space; and significant field/desk research into accountability eco-systems to understand where the Accountability Lab can add the most value in South Africa.

This document lays out the strategic direction for the growth of the Lab in South Africa. It is accompanied by an operational plan which provides details on the various organizational inputs and targets necessary to fulfil this strategy; and a workplan, which provides the programmatic activities and indicators to match the objectives outlined below.

The Challenges

To us, accountability means ensuring that people in power (in government, business, civil society and other types of organizations) are responsible and answerable for the use of that power; and that there are inclusive mechanisms in place to support this process. Accountability is important- because it ensures that governments and other service providers deliver on their responsibilities by responding to citizens' demands in an [evidence-informed way](#). This leads to effective governance and the development of trust between people and power-holders. Accountability is also dynamic- we understand it as a continually evolving set of relationships, incentives and ideas- and as such it requires that stakeholders in the process of building accountability learn and adapt over time.

A lack of accountability is at the heart of many development challenges, jeopardises achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and threatens global efforts to "leave no one behind". It leads to corruption and violence, and deepens poverty and inequality. Corruption is bad for everyone; and in recent times there are few countries that have experienced the level and depth of widespread systemic

corruption as South Africa. Hundreds of millions of dollars have gone missing resulting in rising inequality, a significant increase in the cost of basic goods and services and rampant unemployment. Corruption has eroded public trust and undermined the state's social contract with its citizens.

But perhaps most importantly, it has resulted in significant challenges and missed opportunities for young people. A [2016 study](#) by ISS attempts to provide a detailed picture of youth perceptions of politics and the factors that influence participation. The greatest disincentive to voting? Corruption. The Open Government Partnership (OGP) [Trust in Public Service Report](#) notes that "few perceptions are more palpable than that of trust or its absence". According to [Afrobarometer](#), the events of the last eight years have profoundly shaken the South African citizens' confidence in their leadership and trust in its institutions.

President Cyril Ramaphosa in his 2018 State of the Nation address signaled a renewed political will to "turn the tide against corruption in public institutions" and rebuild the people's trust. However, any attempt to reinvigorate the trust that has been lost will need to be radically different. Current approaches to public participation simply are not creative, relevant and positive enough for this generation. When people work together to strengthen accountability this can lead to real, positive changes in their lives. We believe that by helping citizens create those tools and the communities around them to make them sustainable, we can fill a much-needed gap and change outcomes for thousands of South Africans.

We've found that it is very difficult for citizens- particularly those most socially, economically and politically excluded- to support accountability and the rule of law for a number of reasons. Building accountability is a long and complex process, but externally-led efforts to do so tend to be projectized and short-term. Many tools for accountability are driven by available funding streams- meaning these initiatives often lack sustainability and ownership. Moreover, not nearly enough effort is put into bringing initiatives together into eco-systems- so the opportunity is missed to transform disparate projects into a larger whole. Finally, accountability is a political process but common approaches tend to start with a focus on enforcement and compliance- which begins conversations around problems not solutions, and makes politics of change more difficult to navigate. In short, accountability requires creative, positive approaches to address entrenched political, social and economic dynamics and build a movement for change over time.

Theory of Change

Our theory of change is not an agreed, defined diagram- it is a living document that we amend and refine over time as we learn on the ground. Our most recent theory of change outlines the impact we are looking for in South Africa and around the world and the key inputs, outputs and outcomes that will allow us to get there.



Our Approach

Accountability requires inclusive and meaningful engagement by citizens- particularly those most excluded from power and resources- through a more balanced civil society, government and private sector that represents their interests and can act collectively for change. Accountability must be driven by dynamic, young change-makers who have the understanding, ideas and energy to generate long-term, inter-generational reform. Our South Africa team is led by local advocates and social change experts, who deeply understand their communities and the dynamics that shape development outcomes. They support committed individuals who know best how to positively transform the norms, structures and practices from the bottom-up and the top-down.

AL South Africa 2019 Programming

A variety of literature (including a 2015 report by the [Global Partnership for Social Accountability](#) suggests that simply creating accountability tools and equipping citizens with information has mixed results. Greater impact occurs through strategic approaches that bring together citizens, governments (and businesses) to build accountability through an eco-system approach. For us, this means connecting-the-dots among and between ideas, initiatives and people- to generate a collective shift towards shared

outcomes. The coalitions and communities that emerge through this kind of approach can amplify accountability messages and tools.

Campaign: Integrity Idol

The Accountability Lab uses the convening power of campaigns to build coalitions of like-minded individuals and organizations. [Integrity Idol](#) is a campaign to find, support and celebrate honest government officials around the world through a collective media effort to turn these officials into national celebrities. Integrity Idol creates massive positive engagement around the issue of integrity and it opens the space for us to engage on other key areas of our work such as advocacy and policy change, and skills and knowledge development. In 2018, after consulting with approximately 40 entities including civil society, non-profits, business, government agencies and media the Lab launched [Integrity Idol in South Africa](#) –to ‘Name and Fame’ honest civil servants.

Key outcomes from the 2018 campaign include:

- Partnerships with the Nelson Mandela Foundation, Corruption Watch, and Democracy Works Foundation amongst others;
- Over 500 nominations, approximately 10,000 votes and millions of viewers in South Africa and beyond;
- A 3 months film fellowship for previously disadvantaged South Africans all of whom are now employed (3 as a direct result of partnerships with the Lab);
- Idol speaking engagements at various events including the African Public Service Day and the Young Africa Leadership initiative global conference. The winner has also been chosen to be on the Department of Public Service and Administrations’ Integrity Committee.

For 2019, we are looking to leverage the networks and partnerships which were established during the 2018 campaign in order to achieve our overall goal which is to *increase awareness, change mindsets and highlight positive deviance around accountability.*

These activities will include:

- Integrity Idol Responsible Leaders Workshop – we will bring the 2018 Idols, government, business and civil society into a discussion about accountability, good governance and integrity;
- Partnering with [Sunshine Cinema](#) to screen our films in the most marginalized and isolated communities around the country and facilitating conversations around accountability and integrity amongst ordinary citizens;
- We are partnering with education institutions to develop and offer a formal, accredited mobile story-telling for social change program to the Integrity idol Film Fellows;
- The development of an Integrity Fellowship for young people to spend at least 1 month with Idols during the South African Winter Holidays, working with them to build integrity within government systems;
- Accountability and leadership training for the Idols, and their teams, in partnership with [LifeCo Unlimited](#) using the “Nelson Mandela: Champion Within” methodology.

Skills and Knowledge: Accountability Curriculum

The Accountability Lab has also developed a citizen-driven countering corruption curriculum, a 7-day residential program for activists, creatives and changemakers. We believe that corruption is a crime of networks and power. By using traditionally non-political spaces, we are attempting to illustrate how the

networks and power structures necessary for even low-level deviance contributes to high-level corruption. Underpinned by the principles of [Public Work](#), participants are given the tools to develop creative ways to counter these networks and power structures. We will run three iterations of the program for 15 and 25 participants in 2019, partnering with unlikely and diverse anti-corruption and citizen engagement organisations including [Streetbiz](#), the [Trinity Sessions](#) and [Dlala Nje](#). The key is to approach these problems in new, engaging ways, to make sure diverse voices are heard and new, dynamic coalitions can be built. We have also developed an MOU with the [Ethics Institute](#), who will work with us to formalize the curriculum and test it amongst a number of key audiences including government and big business.

Skills and Knowledge: Business Accountability Incubator

South Africa has suffered in recent years from difficult issues related to state capture, collusion, corruption and patronage. There are still few, creative programs that explicitly work to support new leadership, ensure greater understanding of corporate accountability and build integrity more broadly within the private sector. What exists are either internal corporate trainings among larger businesses (which themselves are often lacking in creativity and follow-up) or broader conversations or research on these issues without specific hands-on support for people at the front lines on these issues.

Young business leaders with integrity are not receiving the support they need in South Africa and this has to change quickly if South Africa is to manage its internal challenges and compete in the global marketplace. The Accountability Lab has been working with Deloitte- both members of the World Economic Forum's Partnering Against Corruption Initiative (PACI)- to conceptualize a business accountability incubator. Building on the Lab's larger Accountability Incubator for civil society activists, this will source and support cohorts of creative South Africans every year known as "accountapreneurs" (accountability entrepreneurs).

The accountapreneurs will come any sector- from a young civil society leader who has a great idea for supply chain transparency; to a business manager who wants to roll-out a new interactive ethics module within his corporation; to a manager within a state-owned enterprise who wants to use blockchain to validate business processes. The emphasis will be on youth (under age 35), innovation and integrity. Through a competitive process beginning in early 2019, chosen participants will receive on an annual basis:

- *Training*- 100+ hours of in-person training at the Lab's facility in Johannesburg, focusing on issues of integrity, accountability, transparency, ethics and internal governance. The content will draw on the Accountability Lab's curriculum developed over 7+ years and a variety of partnerships with leading academic institutions in South Africa that focus on these issues including the University of Stellenbosch and the University of Witwatersrand;
- *Mentorship*- on an ongoing basis from our team of experts and affiliates (on a 1:1 basis), to develop, test and pilot creative approaches to building accountability within business in South Africa. This will include support to proto-typing, feedback on ideas, support for roll-out and the development of impact measurement strategies. The incubator will also work beyond the individual ideas to create coalitions among and between accountapreneurs to build synergies and ensure collective impact through introductions, meet-ups and webinars.
- *Networks*- the Lab has significant networks across government, business and civil society within South Africa and beyond. We will work to connect the accountapreneurs to those that can support and grow their initiatives, including C-Suite executives, government officials, other capacity-building networks,

academia, the media and international initiatives. Activities will include regular business accountability pitch nights, competitions, “friendraisers” and roundtables.

- *Communications*- our team will work to build the profile of the accountpreneurs and their initiatives as part of the larger conversation in South Africa on corruption and integrity. The Lab will provide opportunities for public discussion, support for messaging and outreach, branding advice and connections to the media. We will also work with our visual storytelling team and South African film lab to develop compelling videos about these ideas and issues; and work to connect the accountpreneurs to other successful Accountability Lab campaigns in South Africa such as [Integrity Idol](#).
- *Sustainability*- our team will also support these initiatives in various ways with fundraising and sustainability. This will vary depending on the position and approach of the accountpreneur, but may include seed funding to catalyze ideas, assistance in proposal writing for foundations, crowdfunding, pitching to senior management or raising investment from investors. The focus from the outset through the incubator will be designing sustainability into the ideas to ensure longevity over time.

In 2019, the Lab intends to bring initially 5-10 accountpreneurs through the program, chosen strategically to represent a variety of sectors, sizes of organizations and types of approaches. This will allow for cross-pollination of ideas and the development of alternative coalitions that can push for change. Over time, the Incubator intends to build a cohort of future leaders and managers who will reach key decision-making positions within South Africa and can lead a new and very different approach to building accountability across the private- and public- sectors.

Skills and Knowledge: Non-Profit Management Fellowship

Young people in South Africa seldom have the opportunity to experience what a career in civil society would look like. Internships are few and far between, and often so badly remunerated that it makes it impossible for anybody who does not have additional financial support to participate. The Accountability Lab wants to be part of shaping the next generation of young South African non-profit leaders by providing at least two young South Africans a salaried, one year, fully immersive accountability focused non-profit management fellowship. Fellows are given the opportunity to participate in every aspect of managing a non-profit under the guidance of a senior staff member and country director. The program includes, fundraising, proposal writing, networking, budget development, program development, communications, HR, development and enforcement of policies and procedures, public speaking, international travel and academic writing.

Looking Towards 2020

Building on these efforts in 2019, we are also beginning to think about further areas of research and focus including the gender dimensions of corruption and accountability; and a creative campaign to publicise the SA Guardian Fund in partnership with the South African Department of Justice.

What Does Success Look Like?

For us, success is tangibly improved lives for citizens through greater accountability of those in power. For South Africa in 2019 we will define success by:

- Perceptible shifts in knowledge, awareness, attitudes and behaviors around accountability among the people with which we are working;
- Integrity Idols increase their sphere of influence to secure improvements in the quality of information, decision-making and public services for citizens;
- We have forged new connections between those in the public, private and civil society sectors in support of new ways of thinking about and implementing accountability;
- We have found new ways to generate knowledge around what works in South Africa and disseminated this learning to those that matter both citizens on the ground and people in power;
- We support the establishment and growth of accountability eco-system, between and within our Lab affiliates to work together collaboratively on shared challenges.

Our Structure

The Accountability Lab is structured through a hub and spoke model, registered as a 501c3 in the United States and as a non-profit in South Africa. The Accountability Lab in South Africa has its own governance structures with a local Boards of Directors that provides governance and fiduciary oversight; a local team that executes the work programs; and local systems, policies and procedures to guide operations. We feel that this provides a firm basis for local ownership, development and sustainability.

Accountability Lab- Structure and Responsibilities		
Function	Accountability Lab US	Accountability Lab South Africa
<i>Work Program Delivery</i>	Support for design; synthesis of data	Design, implementation, data collection and oversight of programs
<i>Learning and Impact</i>	Sharing learning; feeding ideas into global policy discussions	Gathering learning on-the-ground; building learning communities in-country
<i>Fundraising</i>	Relationship-building; partnership development	Relationship-building; grant management; grant reporting
<i>Management and Systems</i>	Overall strategy and direction; system design; advice on implementation	Local management of teams and processes; system implementation
<i>Financial Management</i>	Synthesis of all financial data; oversight of financial management; support for budget development	In-country financial management, oversight, accounting and auditing; budget setting and reporting
<i>Staffing and Human Resources</i>	Design of policies and procedures; support to implementation	Team and talent development; management of human resources
<i>Outreach and Communications</i>	Central website management; social media; support to campaigns and newsletters	Localized social media and websites; design and implementation of campaigns

Learning

Building accountability is a difficult, long and non-linear process. It is highly political and requires a deep understanding of contexts, relationships and incentives. We hope to learn in an adaptive way- meaning developing an understanding not just what works but where and why; and then understanding how successful approaches can be used to inform collective action.

We want to make sure that adaptive learning is at the center of everything we do at the Accountability Lab and is a core part of how we measure our impact. We operationalize this learning in our work in real-time and seek to use this learning to shape the field of accountability and transparency work more broadly in mutually reinforcing ways. That is to say- as we try new things and figure out what works and what does not, we document learnings and make sure these inform our next round of experimentation. We do this through:

- i) **Program design**- tweaking our approaches and trying new ideas within our programs;
- ii) **Data systems**- by making sure usable information is collected at every opportunity to improve the way we operate; and
- iii) **Organizational culture**- by fostering an environment for sharing, and allowing team members the freedom to experiment and work on new ideas.

In terms of external learning, we seek to understand the ways in which our experiences can help to inform the field more broadly and improve the way we collectively work to build accountability. We also look for concrete examples of where learning is leading to improved outcomes and the tools being used to facilitate this process, so that we can use these to improve our own work. We understand that learning is one part of the process of improvement- in the short-term to iterate quickly; and in the long-term to shape our strategy.

Living By Our Principles

Beyond our programmatic work, we also seek to embody our principles in everything we do; and we function as an organization in a way that we hope sets an example and yields lessons for other organizations in the accountability and open governance field and beyond. We do this through: financial transparency (using our [open budget app](#), for example, through which all of our revenue and expenditures can be tracked and mapped continually); [operational openness](#) (through published internal governance documents and board minutes, for example); and our [creative approaches to learning](#), measuring and communicating impact (as demonstrated through our learning and impact reports and quarterly impact calls as outlined above).

Feedback and Contacts

We are very open to ideas, suggestions and feedback on this strategy- what resonates with you? What are we missing? Where have we got it wrong? Feel free to reach out to our Executive Director Blair Glencorse (blair@accountabilitylab.org) with any thoughts. You can keep up-to-date with our progress at www.accountabilitylab.org and on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).