

Nepal: Accountability Incubator

Impact Assessment 2017

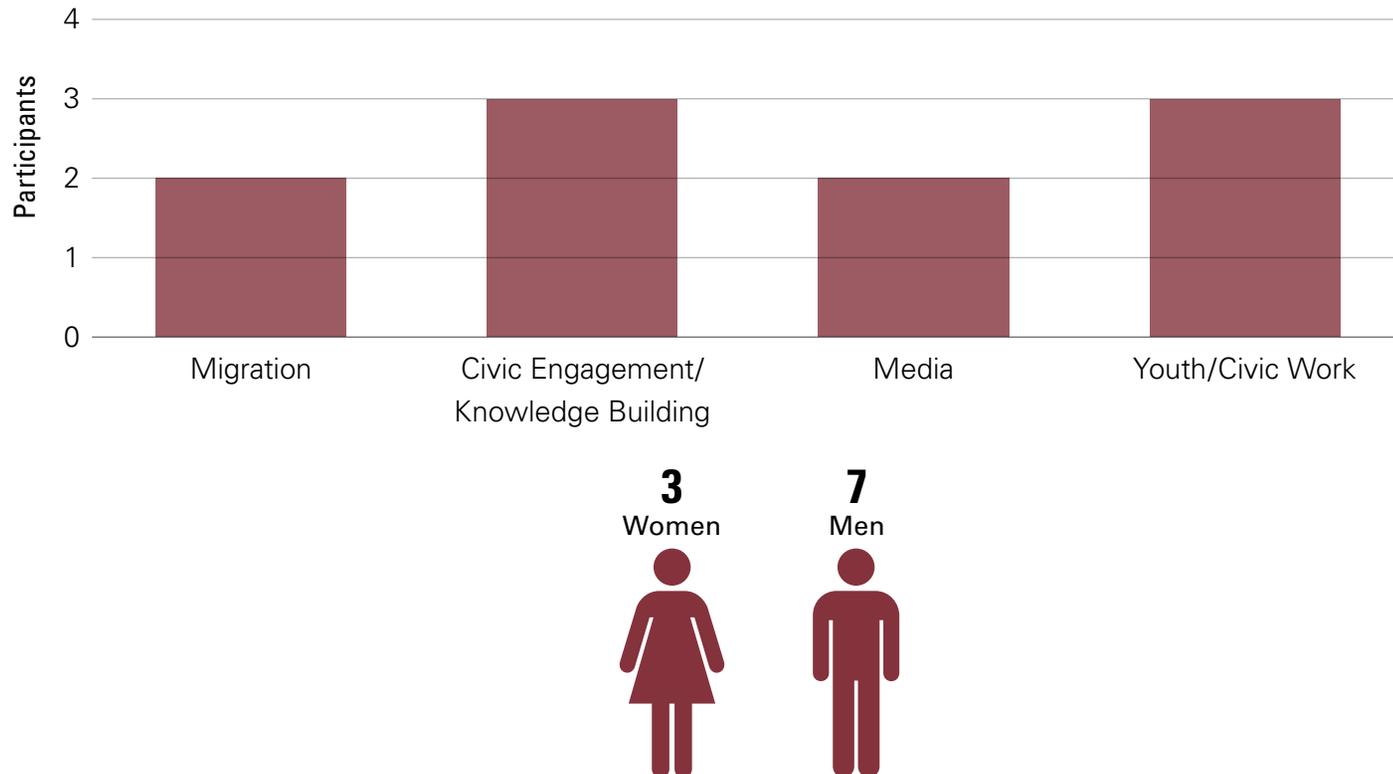


Impact Assessment 2017

The Accountability Incubator is a training and support program for young people with creative ideas for accountability and integrity in their communities. Launched in Nepal in 2013, the incubator hosts “accountapreneurs” for two years, offering them mentorship, training, communications support, and opportunities to grow their networks and collaborate with other accountapreneurs. Until now, the program has also provided up to \$10,000 in seed funding for participants to grow their organizations.

There are currently ten accountapreneurs — seven men and three women — in Nepal’s incubator:

Areas of Focus

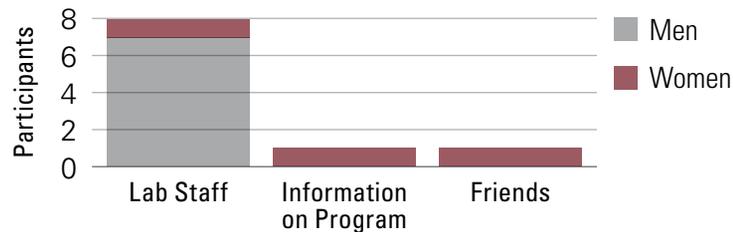


This evaluation was conducted by an external evaluator through an interview questionnaire and interviews with all ten of the current accountapreneurs on their experiences, and discussions with the Accountability Lab Nepal staff about the program.

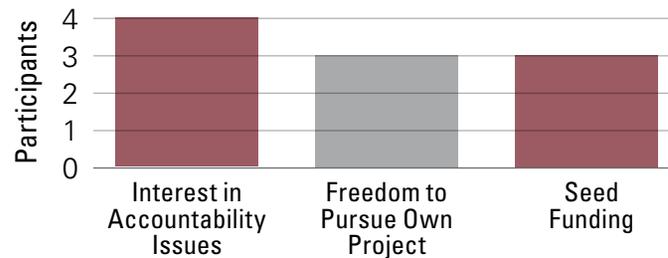
Program Highlights

Most participants learned about the program from Accountability Lab staff. Interest in accountability issues was the top reason participants applied to the program, followed by the opportunity to pursue an independent project and obtain seed funding.

How Participants Learned About the Program

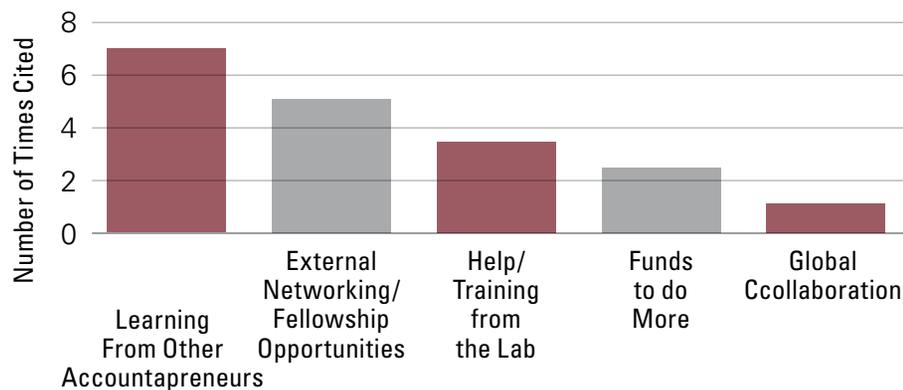


Top Reason for Joining the Program



Once in the program, participants began to see the benefits of belonging to a supportive ecosystem that connected them to likeminded social entrepreneurs and helped them to develop new skills and expertise. More than anything else, the accountpreneurs valued the chance to learn from one another and collaborate on shared goals.

Most Cited Highlights of the Program



Examples of collaboration:

Several hired a film company owned by another accountpreneur to record promotional videos for their campaigns.

One got college students from her program to volunteer as mentors for another's program.

As participants interacted in the incubator, their appreciation for accountability and integrity grew. Many said they would promote accountability more in their personal lives and in their organizations.

The Lab “has helped me understand in real life how accountability issues play out across a variety of sectors, and really internalize the meaning of accountability.”

“I now have a stronger sense of responsibility, and I am integrating this deeper focus into my other organizations as well.”

Accountpreneurs also valued the trainings, which helped them to reset their goals. However, newer accountpreneurs appeared less satisfied with the programs than previous groups, and participants had suggestions for strengthening the program.

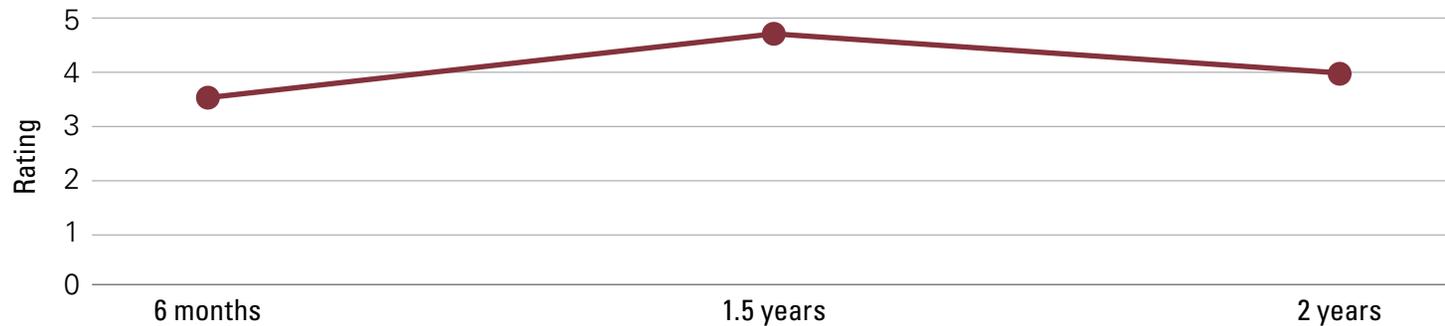
Accountpreneurs’ suggestions for improving the training program:

- Trainings should go deeper and provide more concrete tools
- The Lab should provide a more thorough survey for each new batch of entrepreneurs to assess their training needs
- The Lab should set up self-guided workshops where accountpreneurs can share wisdom with each other

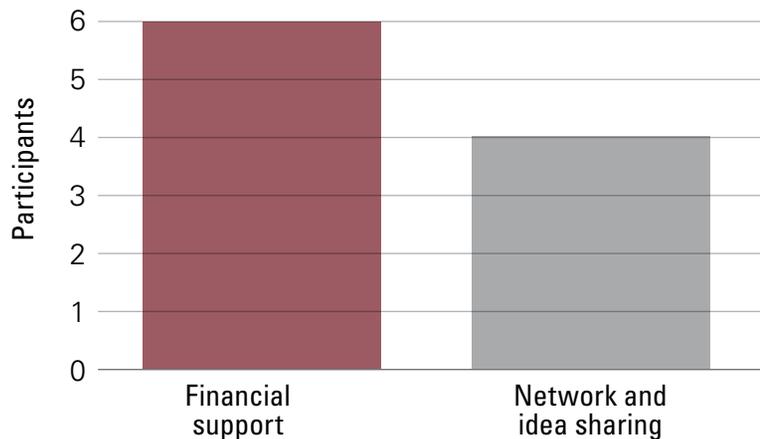
“We need more targeted trainings to allow us to make our programs more effective.”

Rating the Incubator Experience

Overall, the incubator earned high marks. On a scale of 1 to 5, the accountpreneurs rated their experience 3.9. But the average rating changed depending on how long participants were in the program.



Accountpreneurs cited numerous ways the program had helped their organizations grow. The seed funding made it possible for many to hire more staff, enabling them to do more. One participant credited the incubator for helping it register officially and organize three city seminars. Another reached over 50,000 migrant workers and their families through a Lab-sponsored program. And yet another grew his funding streams by 35% and recruited more volunteers.



*When asked how the incubator improved their program, participants cited two key areas: **financial support** and **network/idea sharing**.*

Challenges and Areas for Improvement

The Lab is not always able to provide seed funding to accountpreneurs, yet six out of ten cited this financial support as the most important factor helping them to improve their program.

How else can the incubator help organizations obtain financial support?

Ways for the Lab to help accountpreneurs obtain financial support

- Hold more trainings on fundraising
- Plan more donor-accountpreneur networking events
- Provide more assistance to accountpreneurs applying for funds
- Emphasize the importance of rigorous budgeting and impact analysis for appealing to donors
- Continue our efforts to persuade donors to provide seed funding as much as we can
- Further develop ideas around and training for revenue generation/earned income streams for accountability tools

When surveyed, nearly all participants sought increased collaboration within both the Nepal and the global accountpreneur network.

How can the Lab foster and grow the accountpreneur ecosystem?

Ways to grow and strengthen the incubator's collective community

- Create a platform to promote fellowships, conferences, and other networking opportunities
- Facilitate quarterly Skype meetings for past and present participants on topics of shared interest
- Brainstorm ways to spark more cross-country accountpreneur connections
- Plan more networking events

The Lab staff reported problems coordinating accountpreneur schedules. Accountpreneurs were slow to respond to emails and calls and sometimes were no shows at events.

How can the Lab encourage more responsiveness and accountability from participants?

Improving accountability to the Lab

- Emphasize accountability to the Lab and encourage greater communication and commitment
- Set clearer expectations about attendance, responsiveness, and time commitments
- Give at least two months' notice for meetings and trainings
- Consider attaching sanctions to failure to meet expectations
- Create a shared Google calendar for all incubator events

The Lab must ensure accountpreneurs are assessing their impact correctly and wishes to measure its own contribution more precisely.

How can we better understand and monitor the impact of the Lab?

Improving how we measure impact

- Survey incoming participants on program capacity, staff levels, and other key areas to establish a baseline against which to measure growth in the incubator
- Provide initial training on impact analysis
- Hire impact assessment professional to help accountpreneurs create individual plans and timelines for sharing with the Lab
- Require semiannual impact updates