

AccountabilityLab 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

NIGERIA

2024

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Overview

Accountability Lab (AL) Nigeria has made significant progress in strengthening governance and promoting anti-corruption efforts over the past year through a three-pronged approach: ecosystem building, training and collaborative spaces, and value-shifting campaigns. Through ecosystem building, we have promoted collaboration on accountability and open governance by supporting community feedback loops, such as Civic Action Teams, and facilitating knowledge-sharing among organizations and individuals within our networks.

In addition, our focus on training and collaborative spaces has equipped reformers—both within and outside government—with the knowledge and tools needed to drive better governance. Programs such as Integrity Innovation Labs and the Anti-Corruption Innovation Project have built and connected a strong network of responsible leaders across the states where we operate. To further advance accountability, we have implemented value-shifting campaigns that change mindsets and support accountability champions through positive and engaging programs. Programs like Integrity Icon and Voice to Represent have shifted the conversation around accountability from negative narratives to constructive action, inspiring both citizens and government officials to prioritize integrity.

Over the past year, we have gained useful learnings that will shape our work in 2025. We have seen firsthand that collaboration is essential; strong partnerships with civil society, government, and the private sector have been critical in making governance work. Our approach has demonstrated that certain solutions can be expanded to new regions, amplifying their impact. For example, our programs, such as Civic Action Teams and Procurement Integrity, have shown great potential and could be scaled to different states. We have also learned that sustained citizen engagement plays a critical role in ensuring inclusive and transparent governance. When citizens actively participate—whether through monitoring government projects, providing feedback on service delivery, or engaging in policy discussions—they help create a system of checks and balances that holds public officials accountable. This, in turn, enhances transparency by making governance processes more open and accessible.

Furthermore, our use of storytelling and creative advocacy has been instrumental in shifting societal norms and promoting a culture of integrity. As we look ahead to 2025, these lessons will shape our strategy, ensuring that our efforts remain impactful, practical, and sustainable. We will continue to innovate, collaborate, and engage with stakeholders to strengthen governance systems in Nigeria, ensuring they are both responsive and accountable to citizens.

By the Numbers

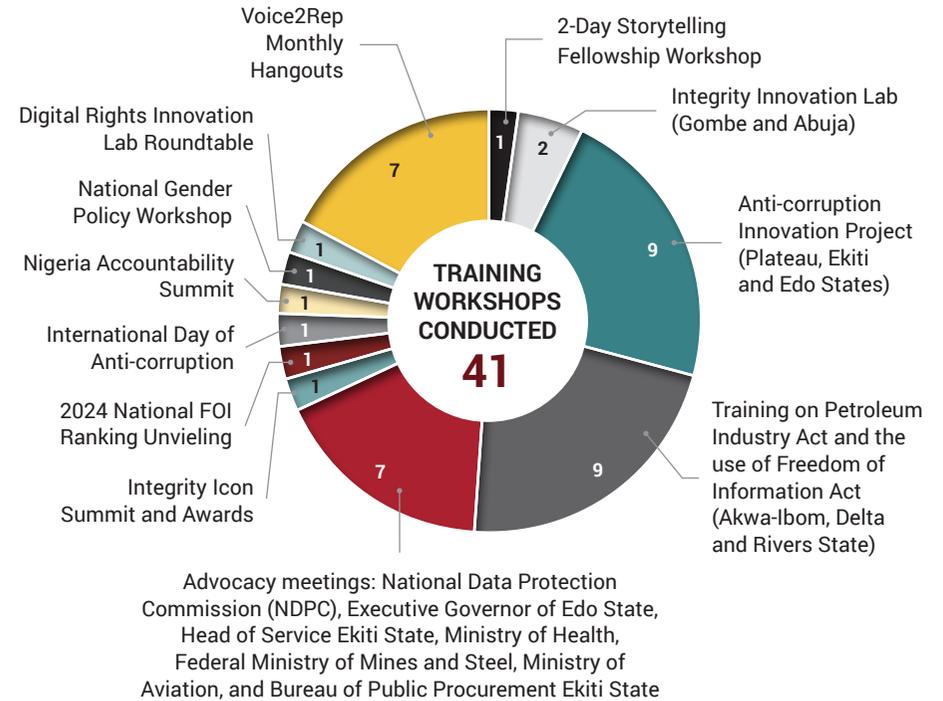


Total number of dialogues and conversations **41**

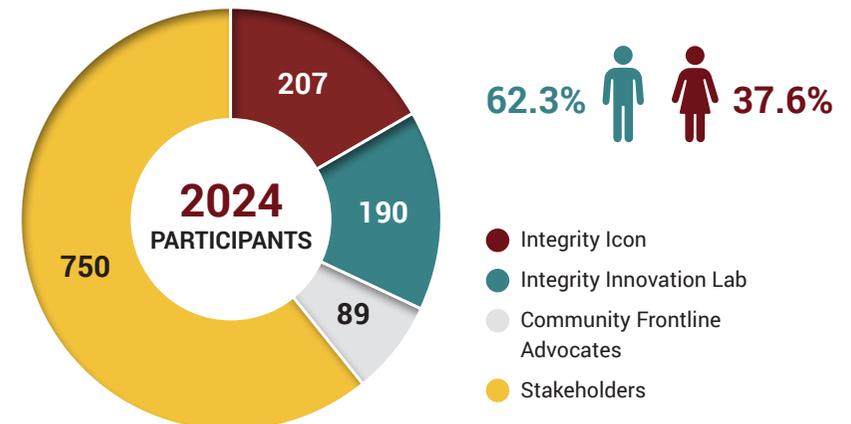
Total number of surveys/respondents **4 810**

What topics were surveys conducted on?

- Assessing Community Participation in the Operations of the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA) and the Host Community Development Trust Fund (HCDTF)
- Citizens' perception on freedom of expression
- Evaluating the transformative impact of our programs: participant feedback and community progress
- Nigeria Constitution Review



PARTICIPANTS IN 2024





In Our Own Words

“It was fascinating to understand the importance of data privacy and how data breaches can impact individuals and communities. It was exciting to learn about my role as a songwriter in promoting social impact and innovative ways of crafting conscious songs using catchy hooks, making them simple yet concise, and focusing on the value of music production.”

CROSSWORDZ, BENEFICIARY, DIGITAL GOVERNANCE.

“I am energized by the opportunity to amplify voices of marginalized communities and the tangible impacts we make through storytelling, no matter how small.”

BLESSING, STORYTELLING DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

“Working with Accountability Lab Nigeria energizes me because I get to witness the direct impact of our work in supporting communities and promoting integrity.”

FAVOUR, VOLUNTEER

“I’m excited by the positive impacts the Lab creates through community engagement and advocacy. Seeing how our projects support citizens to self-advocate is incredibly rewarding.”

FAITH, CAMPAIGN AND ADVOCACY INTERN

“With this sensitization on the Petroleum Industry Act and Freedom of Information Act training, I understand my community’s priorities, rights, and responsibilities.

All we want is a commitment from our settlers”

STEPHEN, BENEFICIARY, ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE



“The lack of proper education on civic rights and responsibilities is a major issue. People need to be aware of their rights and how they can actively participate in governance. Continuous education and awareness campaigns like this hangout put together by Accountability Lab Nigeria are essential to support citizens and create a more informed and engaged society.”

HEPHZIBAH, BENEFICIARY, DIGITAL GOVERNANCE

“Working for the Lab has been quite fulfilling for me; it has given me the opportunity to be part of something bigger than myself, allowing me to contribute meaningfully through my role in supporting the Programs and Communications department.”

HOPE, VOLUNTEER

“What energizes me the most about working with the Lab is the continuous growth I experience and the productivity it fosters. I’m especially excited by the new opportunities for innovation and collaboration that drive meaningful change in the communities we serve.

DORCAS, VOLUNTEER



“Through Accountability Lab Nigeria’s training workshops, procurement agencies have been supported to prioritize transparency and integrity, promoting a culture of trust and accountability. Citizens like me have been armed with the knowledge to engage in procurement processes to ensure that public resources are managed effectively and used for the common good of the citizens.”

MARIE, BENEFICIARY, PROCUREMENT INTEGRITY

Public Finance Management: Procurement Integrity

The procurement systems in [Edo, Ekiti, and Plateau states](#) have faced challenges related to transparency, accountability, and inefficiency. These issues, including the limited availability of procurement data, hinder the ability of citizens, the media, and civil society to monitor government service delivery, which increases [the risk of corruption and mismanagement of public funds](#). The lack of civic engagement, limited public awareness, and existing regulatory gaps have worsened these problems. Strengthening procurement processes is essential for economic growth, promoting inclusive growth, and ensuring the efficient use of public resources. In response, UNDP Nigeria, The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, AL Nigeria, and the procurement agencies in Edo, Ekiti, and Plateau states used technology and new ideas to improve the publication of procurement data. This is due to our understanding that enhanced access to information can identify procurement issues, aid in decision-making, and encourage greater participation in monitoring public services. A number of targeted engagements were held to promote technology-driven procurement solutions and procurement practices that take gender into account. This has made the procurement system



more open and effective.

These engagements include a breakfast conversation, an all-stakeholders consultative meeting and a press briefing where we made a presentation on the state of e-procurement and open contracting across various states and engaged key representatives from the Bureau of Public Procurement (BPP) and other government agencies in a comprehensive dialogue. As a result of our suggestions for the long-term implementation of open contracting and e-procurement, procurement officers will receive targeted technical training, enhancing their skills and familiarity with new systems. Community town hall meetings are essential in equipping citizens with the knowledge to access, understand, and use procurement data effectively. The adoption of the e-procurement system by all MDAs in the state will ensure comprehensive government participation, build trust, and promote effective procurement practices. 139 participants (60% male, 40% female) contributed their insights and solutions to these conversations to improve procurement processes.

“The engagement highlighted grey areas and ways to improve them. It also provided an opportunity to ask questions that clarified some misunderstood data from the open contracting portal while we find ways for better collaboration.”

- LAWRENCE RICHES, INSPIRATION CARE AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER EKITI.

“The partnership between UNDP, and Accountability Lab is transforming public procurement in Edo State, building power for citizens to actively engage and ensuring transparency in governance. This is meaningful progress through informed participation.” - **MR. HENRY IDOGUN, DIRECTOR OF EDO PPA**



We also conducted training sessions for 37 Community Frontline Associates (CFAs) (54% male, 46% female), including members of civil society organizations (CSOs) and journalists. These sessions offered hands-on experience in using open contracting and procurement data. In a bid to improve service delivery, we supported participants with the skills to monitor project implementation and report to relevant agencies, ensuring value for money. We also trained 18 journalists on creating compelling, data-driven stories that promote procurement integrity. At the end of the training, participants learned practical skills and tools to use procurement data in telling impactful stories and monitor procurement projects effectively, enhancing innovation and promoting the efficient and transparent use of public funds.

"Open contracting supports procurement agencies to lead with transparency and integrity, building a culture of trust and accountability. When citizens are actively engaged, public resources are protected and directed toward the common good."

- AISHATU SABO, COMMUNITY FRONTLINE ADVOCATE.



Number of journalist trained **18**

MacArthur Foundation

accountabilitylab NIGERIA

Introducing
AI in Open Contracting

Bringing Public Procurement to the People—Smarter, Faster, **Open**

- ✓ Easy access to public procurement records.
- ✓ Supporting citizens, journalists, researchers, and policymakers to understand government spending.

INTEGRATED IN:
Edo, Ekiti and Plateau States

We also launched an [AI-integrated tool in the three states, Edo, Ekiti, and Plateau](#), to make public procurement information more accessible. We designed the tool to automatically extract information from scanned procurement data uploaded to the platform, transforming it into structured data with minimal effort. The platform features an interactive chat function, allowing users to ask questions about public contracts as they relate to the states. They can also access over 2500 public procurement data across the three states in real-time. This tool gives the government and policymakers an advantage in improving their efficiency and decision-making expense analysis, lowering the cost of governance in public procurement processes, and making administration easier.

We also launched a [social media campaign](#) that reached 811,091 people to raise awareness about abandoned projects to draw the attention of relevant stakeholders, encourage the ongoing use of procurement data, and highlight the progress made in the three states. Civic engagement has increased, [with journalists actively monitoring and reporting on procurement activities](#).

Through these efforts, we are institutionalizing open contracting practices and reinforcing e-procurement systems to ensure better access to procurement data, reduce corruption risks, and drive sustainable economic development. The deployment of open contracting dashboards in the three states is already transforming public procurement processes. In Ekiti State, following a media publication on the project, the Governor requested a [procurement clinic for procurement officers](#), further strengthening the commitment to transparency and efficiency in procurement. During the conversation, issues such as direct labor where high-ranking officials, including permanent secretaries and general managers, are awarded contracts were addressed, as the state law mandates open competitive bidding. Despite challenges such as capacity constraints and limited public awareness and engagement, these efforts have supported the development of local communities and broader efforts to improve public service delivery in these states.





Environmental Justice

The Nigerian [Petroleum Industry Act \(PIA\)](#) 2021 was signed into law after over a decade of legislative and policy reviews. The PIA introduces significant reforms, including establishing the Host Community Development Trust Fund (HCDTF). The HCDTF is designed to promote sustainable development, social inclusiveness, and economic upliftment of impacted areas in oil-producing communities. However, there is a need for citizens to be actively engaged and well-informed in the remittance and the utilization of funds from the HCDT.



This is why we prioritized implementing sustainable environmental justice programs in Delta, Rivers, and Akwa Ibom states. As part of our efforts to effectively engage with various communities, we established the Community Justice Teams (CJTs). They played an important role in the process, conducting surveys across these states to assess community participation in the operations of the HCDF and the PIA, engaging over 2,400 respondents. The data collected revealed significant gaps in the awareness of the PIA and HCDF, as well as concerns regarding the process of appointing trustees and decision-makers for the HCDF. In order to bridge this gap, we conducted community-based sensitization, town hall meetings, and radio shows on the provisions of the PIA in relation to the HCDF. Additionally, we conducted training on the Freedom of Information Act to equip communities with the knowledge needed to access information and engage oil companies regarding the 3% Operating Expenditure (OpEx) as stated in the PIA concerning the HCDF. These efforts supported them to self-advocate.

"I will translate the knowledge and skills gained from the sensitization to my community by engaging them in town hall meetings, providing regular updates, and ensuring they are informed about the PIA, fund allocations, and progress made, ultimately aiding in community development and effective conflict resolution."

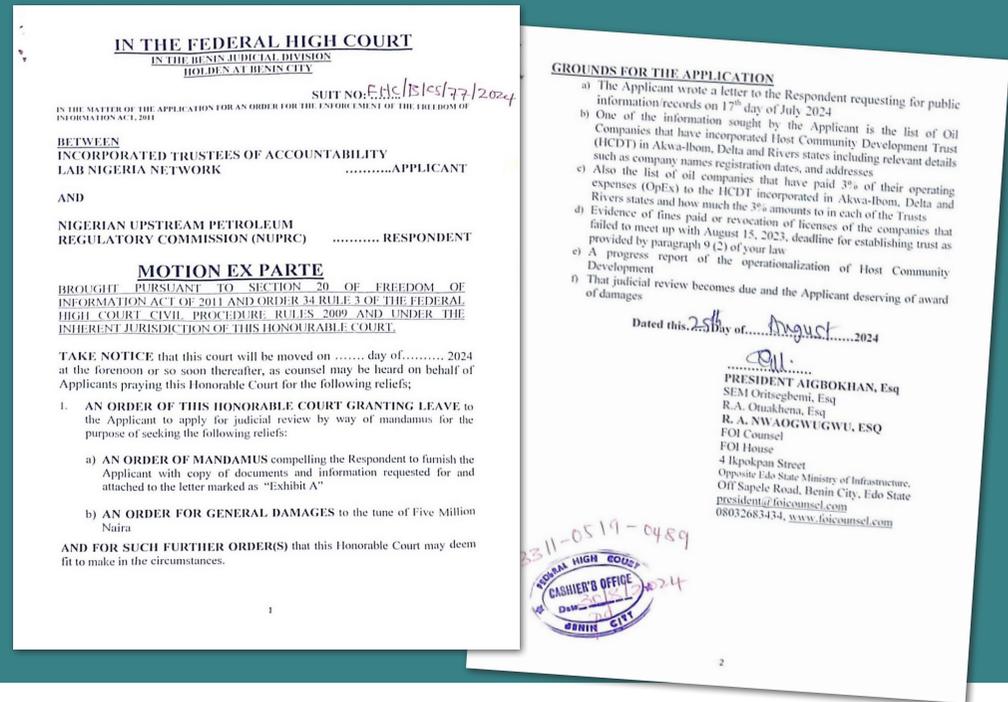
- PARTICIPANT



The community radio shows proved to be an effective approach in amplifying the voices of community members and marginalized groups. It reached an audience of 7.5 million listeners across Akwa Ibom, Rivers, and Delta states; the show engaged callers who attested to the usefulness and impact.

"I was discouraged about seeking justice in my community that was affected by pollution from the activities of the oil companies but listening to today's episode of this program, I'll take action on behalf of my people"
- LISTENER

Section 240 of the PIA also says that oil companies have to remit 3% of their actual OpEx to the HCDTF to support the improvement of infrastructure, education, healthcare, and the overall health of these oil-producing communities' environments. However, important questions from people in the Niger Delta about how clear the 3% OpEx remittances are left unanswered because the [Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission's \(NUPRC\) Host Comply](#) portal is still unresponsive in terms of getting important data. In response, we sent on different occasions 3 Freedom of Information (FOI) request letters to the NUPRC seeking the disclosure of information to address the community's concerns. However, NUPRC declined, citing the information as "too financial and commercial" in nature. Due to NUPRC's refusal to disclose details on the 3% OPEX remitted by oil companies to the HCDTF under PIA, [we pursued legal action in collaboration with FOI Counsel](#). The Federal High Court in Benin City, after hearing our application, granted us permission to seek judicial review against NUPRC's non-disclosure.



Despite these challenges, progress has been made- with AL Nigeria's advocacy efforts, 11 out of the 16 Settlers in 9 focal communities have inaugurated their trusts, albeit beyond the timeline specified in the [PIA Act of 2021](#). However, funding remains limited, with only 5 Settlers initiating contributions to support projects outlined in their Community Development Plans (CDPs). In five HCDDT within communities—Upenekang, Uquo, Uyenge, and Uzere—projects aligned with community priorities are underway, which is a positive step toward addressing the needs of the communities. The CJTs' work to protect the environment has also led to some [changes](#). For example, Mrs. Ann Linda, a member of the CJTs, was appointed to Agip Oil's Advisory Committee in Utagba-Ogbe in Delta State within the HCDDT structure, the oil industry, and the quick cleanup of oil spills in Uquo and Upenekang communities in Akwa Ibom State by working directly with oil companies. [ExxonMobil also initiated a waste management project](#) and awarded contracts to local businesses in the Ibeno local government area, directly benefiting the communities.



Digital Governance

According to a report, Nigeria’s security agencies, particularly the Nigeria Police Force (NPF), garnered negative attention in 2024 due to a troubling trend of unauthorised arrests, which provoked local outrage and raised questions about the validity of charges under the Cybercrime Act. The Nigerian government’s efforts to suppress dissent have intensified, leading to increased restrictions on journalists, activists, and everyday citizens who speak out against pressing national issues such as economic instability, corruption, and governance failures. The shrinking civic space has made it increasingly difficult for individuals to freely express their opinions without fear of harassment, censorship, or legal repercussions. As authorities tighten their grip on digital spaces and public discourse, it has become more critical than ever to create platforms that support individuals advocating for our democratic society, that is currently under threat.



In response to these growing concerns, the Voice2Rep campaign, which bridges the gap between art and advocacy, expanded its efforts to promote digital rights, democratic norms, and citizen participation in government. We supported young artists with the tools and knowledge they needed to advocate for free expression, data privacy, and constitutional rights in an increasingly restrictive political environment. We did this by conducting 5 hangouts—a platform that educated and supported 51 young music artists on the need for public advocacy, digital rights, and freedom of expression. The Data and Digital Rights Coalition (DDRC), consisting of CSOs advocating for digital rights and data protection, provided an opportunity for these artists to learn about how they can use their talents to lead democracy and development efforts.



"If we want change in Nigeria, we must start thinking collectively rather than individually. Only then will Nigeria truly change. Politicians use bigotry to divide, conquer, and silence our voices. It takes collaboration to change this with music."

- ONYEKACHI AJAH EYON, A POET

"I've learned how to use my creativity to advocate for the best interest of society." This experience has helped me find my voice and advocate for more than just the latest musical trends."

- IMMACULATE OGAGA OVWURHUGHEN

I endured three days of beatings, arrests, and detention during EndSARS. The widespread lack of awareness about Nigeria's issues is concerning. To truly effect change, we need massive education campaigns led by brave CSO leaders."

- DAVID IKANI, ALSO KNOWN AS CROSSWORDZ

With guidance from the DDRC, artists are now better able to advance democratic discourse in the digital space, raise awareness about cybersecurity and Nigeria's National Data Protection Act, and inform their communities about reporting procedures for digital rights violations.

One of our campaign's standout features is the monthly music challenge, which encourages artists to collaborate and create songs that advance democratic digital norms. Some creative content from the monthly challenge explored themes such as the [right to protest](#), [good governance is not rocket science](#), [we are united in diversity](#), [people's power](#), [expression without fear](#), [public advocacy and digital rights](#), and [telling the whole story](#).

We collaborated with Tapnitiative to host a one-day roundtable discussion on the judiciary's role in digital rights enforcement. The roundtable had 22 participants (54.5% male and 45.5% female), which included diverse stakeholders, legal professionals, and CSOs, emphasising the importance of judicial oversight and ethical surveillance practices in protecting digital rights. Case studies from participants demonstrated the negative impact of unchecked digital surveillance on human rights defenders. One key example was [the Lagos Federal High Court's ruling on May 16, which upheld a regulation requiring financial institutions to collect customers' social media handles as part of the Know Your Customer \(KYC\) process, undermining citizens' privacy and raising data protection concerns.](#)

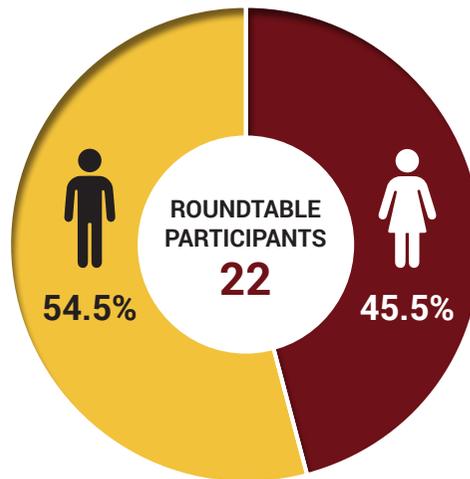


"Sometimes I prefer to leave comments like 'lol' on social media posts because I don't want to risk being picked up and detained."

- SAMUEL OLUKADE, LEGAL ADVISOR AT HOPE BEHIND BARS

"I can no longer express my opinions on social media for fear of being arrested. Many journalists have been detained for simply doing their jobs."

- BANKOLE ABE, INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALIST, INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING (ICIR)



Also, as part of our advocacy efforts, members of the DDRC paid an advocacy visit to the Honourable Minister of Communications, Innovation, and Digital Economy, Dr. Bosun Tijani. During the engagement, we emphasized the importance of policies that protect citizens' digital rights and promote an open and secure internet and a strong digital governance framework in ensuring democratic participation and preventing the erosion of civic space.

Additional Highlights



PROCUREMENT INTEGRITY

At the beginning of the year 2024 in Ekiti State, a key stakeholders' forum was held to boost accountability in government projects and improve quality service for citizens. One significant project discussed was the construction of a fence around Ifelodun Nursery and Primary School.

We identified a pressing need for proper fencing. Without it, the school faced frequent encroachment by non-students, resulting in security threats and tragic incidents of assault. The lack of a secure boundary left students and teachers vulnerable, with reports of some female students suffering attacks, including instances of sexual assault.

Following advocacy and persistent follow-ups by a community frontline advocate, the construction of a perimeter fence was initiated and completed. This new secure fence now provides much-needed safety, significantly improving the security and well-being of all students and staff.



ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Martins Asukpa, a member of the Ibeno community in Akwa Ibom State, witnessed the environmental pollution caused by the operations of ExxonMobil, which harmed the livelihoods and health of community members. AL Nigeria identified the need for increased community advocacy, which resulted in the establishment of the Community Justice Team (CJT). Through AL Nigeria's Civic Action Teams, Martins and other CJTs were trained to understand the PIA and HCDTF to self-advocate for their rights. A radio show tagged "Voices of the Community" was also launched to raise awareness. Martins actively participated in advocacy efforts alongside other CJTs, including town hall meetings and engagement with ExxonMobil to demand environmental remediation and community development. As a result, ExxonMobil acknowledged its environmental impact and took action, including a waste management project and awarding contracts to local contractors. Martins emerged as a community leader, continuing to advocate for Ibeno's rights, while ExxonMobil committed to more sustainable development projects in the community.



"The people of Ibeno have experienced a significant change concerning the HCDTF. Ettlors can no longer exploit us because we now know better. I urge Accountability Lab Nigeria to persist in their commendable efforts, particularly with their radio program.

- MARTINS ASUKPA

The poster features the Accountability Lab Nigeria logo at the top left and the Integrity Icon Nigeria logo at the top right. The main title '2024 INTEGRITY ICONS' is prominently displayed in large, bold, black letters. Below the title, five circular portraits of the winners are shown. At the bottom, the event details are provided: 'DEC 5 | AM 10' with calendar and clock icons, and the location 'Shehu Musa Yar'adua Center, One Memorial Drive, Municipal, Abuja 900211, Federal Capital Territory.' Logos for MacArthur Foundation, Luminate, and Shehu Musa Yar'adua Foundation are at the bottom.



Ezekiel Osemuahu Obazele



Inspector Kamoshi Tada



Olugbenga Johnson Kuye



Temitope Omobola Ojoge



Idowu Quadri Abdullah

INTEGRITY ICON CAMPAIGN

At the 8th edition of the Integrity Icon Summit and Awards in 2024, after carefully reviewing 2,549 nominations for the Integrity Icon Nigeria campaign, we celebrated and honored the top five Integrity Icons- public servants who have exemplified integrity and ethical and responsible leadership across education, procurement, health, and security sectors. The campaign, which reached 1,751,160 people through a combination of social and traditional media, strengthened positive discussions about government officials and promoted trust within our government institutions.

MEET THE 2024 INTEGRITY ICONS

EZEKIEL OBAZELE

A public procurement officer. His dedication and responsible leadership have transformed the Edo State Public Procurement Agency. He supported the implementation of an e-procurement system to minimise human interference.

INSPECTOR KAMOSHI TADA

A police officer in Kano State. She prioritises humanity and integrity over personal gain, holding offenders accountable and helping vulnerable inmates reintegrate back into society.

OLUGBENGA KUYE

An internal auditor at the Lagos State Accident and Emergency Center (LASAEC), known by his colleagues as “the auditor who cannot be swayed.” His commitment as a health sector auditor has reduced the issue of ghost workers.

TEMITOPE OJOGE

Principal of Fiwasaye Grammar School. With zero tolerance for unethical practices, she ensured transparency in utilising £180,000 of legacy funds donated to the school, despite significant pressure to mismanage them.

IDOWU QUADRI

A public procurement officer in Lagos State, made the right decision by rejecting offers that would have allowed contractors to use substandard materials on a project that could potentially endanger the lives of school pupils in Lagos State.

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

Total annual budget **\$601,250**

Total number of grants **3** | Total number of staff **10**

Total number of volunteers **122** (CFAs 82, IIN 30, Lab 10)

Total number of program participants reached directly **1236**

Total number of program participants reached indirectly **10,067,061**



STAFF CORNER

At Accountability Lab Nigeria, we believe in recognizing talent and supporting growth within our team. In 2024, we promoted two interns from the Administrative and Programs departments to full-time Associate positions—an important step into our staff category. With these promotions, we now have an HR/Admin Associate dedicated to strengthening our internal operations and a Gender Associate focused on advancing gender-responsive programs. These additions not only reflect our commitment to staff development but also enhance our capacity to create the change we want to see. We celebrate their achievements and look forward to the contributions they will bring in their new roles.

[LEARN MORE](#)