

AMPLIFYING VOICES

2012-2015 REPORT

DEFENDING RIGHTS





“The lawyers from Accountability Counsel supported us to defend the rights of our community. Every step of the way, they worked tirelessly and with patience to make sure our voices were heard. We stopped a project from destroying our freshwater creek, a treasured resource, and the people and environment in our region have Accountability Counsel to thank.”

Gabino Vicente, Santa Úrsula, Oaxaca, Mexico



“The Draper Richards Kaplan Foundation is a proud investor in Accountability Counsel. With a staff of just 8, we are seeing this organization use their incredible leverage to ensure that the voices of the most marginalized are heard, while addressing root causes of injustice. We are excited to work with Accountability Counsel to achieve the scale — of both the organization and its impact — that these issues deserve.”

Christy Chin, Draper Richards Kaplan Foundation

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FROM OUR FOUNDER

Dear Friends,

This year marks the sixth anniversary since Accountability Counsel's founding. As I reflect on the past three years, it is breathtaking to acknowledge the change in the world, the far-reaching impact we have achieved, and the growth we have undergone as an organization in this second half of Accountability Counsel's existence. Our three programs – *Communities*, *Policy*, and *Resources* – have evolved to better meet the needs of the communities that depend on us, and to propel the critical role of accountability in international finance and development as a whole.

In our daily work with clients like Battsengel in Mongolia, Hadija in Kenya, and Uktaji in Nepal, we see firsthand the need for a vigorous and effective accountability system. We see camel herders struggling to maintain their livelihoods in the face of mining, communities concerned that a coal-fired power plant will destroy their fisheries and mangroves, and indigenous villagers challenging violent displacement as a result of construction of a transmission line. Though these communities are diverse, they have one powerful common thread – with our counsel, they are bravely challenging abuse by

using accountability offices. We are honored to amplify the voices of these communities to defend their rights and make the rules that govern international finance meaningful.

In the past three years, accomplishments in our *Communities* program have included: a public investigation report validating the efforts of our clients in Nepal, whose campaign has so far stopped forced displacement of many and brought others a meaningful forum for discussing compensation; creation of a platform for our clients in Mongolia to address disputes with a global mining company; and for our clients in Colombia, our intervention brought them immediate benefit when it assured that their complaint would be investigated.

As our lawyers work at the grassroots, the past three years have keenly shown the fragility of the framework governing global accountability system. In order to deliver justice, the system requires good, strong rules at institutions like the World Bank, and accountability offices that – *both on paper and in practice* – embody principles of fairness and effectiveness. While peer organizations focus on maintaining strong rules in development finance, our *Policy* program focuses on the accountability system needed to make those rules meaningful. We do this by responding to policy failures, as well as proactively influencing the system. For example, the World Bank Inspection Panel's failure to conduct investigations, a United States agency's failure to staff its accountability office, and a corporate accountability system's failure to deliver remedy to victims, have all turned into recent Accountability Counsel policy initiatives. A quickly shifting landscape with a whole new set of actors investing in international development has required our proactive advocacy for accountability at the Asian Infrastructure and

We are honored to amplify the voices of these communities to defend their rights and make the rules that govern international finance meaningful.

Investment Bank (AIIB) and New Development Bank (NDB). As examples of the deep change we can create with few resources, in the past three years we have improved policies governing four established development banks and played an instrumental role in fostering accountability within the United Nations system.

Our *Resources* program houses the network engagement, research, publications, and trainings that fuel Accountability Counsel's other two programs and support the field of development justice as a whole. Accomplishments in the past three years have included creating and fostering an active network of advocates; release of the eighth edition of our *Accountability Resource Guide*; several groundbreaking research initiatives; and trainings for partners in communities around the world on how to effectively use accountability offices. We have also developed *pro bono* partnerships that have made an outsized contribution in achieving results in Liberia, India, and Nepal. Our dedicated Strategic Support attorneys have conducted much of this work in addition to their heavy caseload as we work to raise the funds to hire a full-time *Resources* program director.

To keep pace with all of this activity, we have more than doubled our staff size to eight. In 2015, we opened an office – our third – in Washington, D.C. We are moving quickly to grow our capacity to take up all the requests of our services that we currently have to turn away. We are committed to this growth because what is at stake is no less important than the lives of millions of people and the health of the environments that they – and we – depend on for survival.

You have made the tremendous work and achievement in this three-year report possible. We thank you and hope you feel as compelled as we do to help us meet the challenges that the next three years – and beyond – will bring.

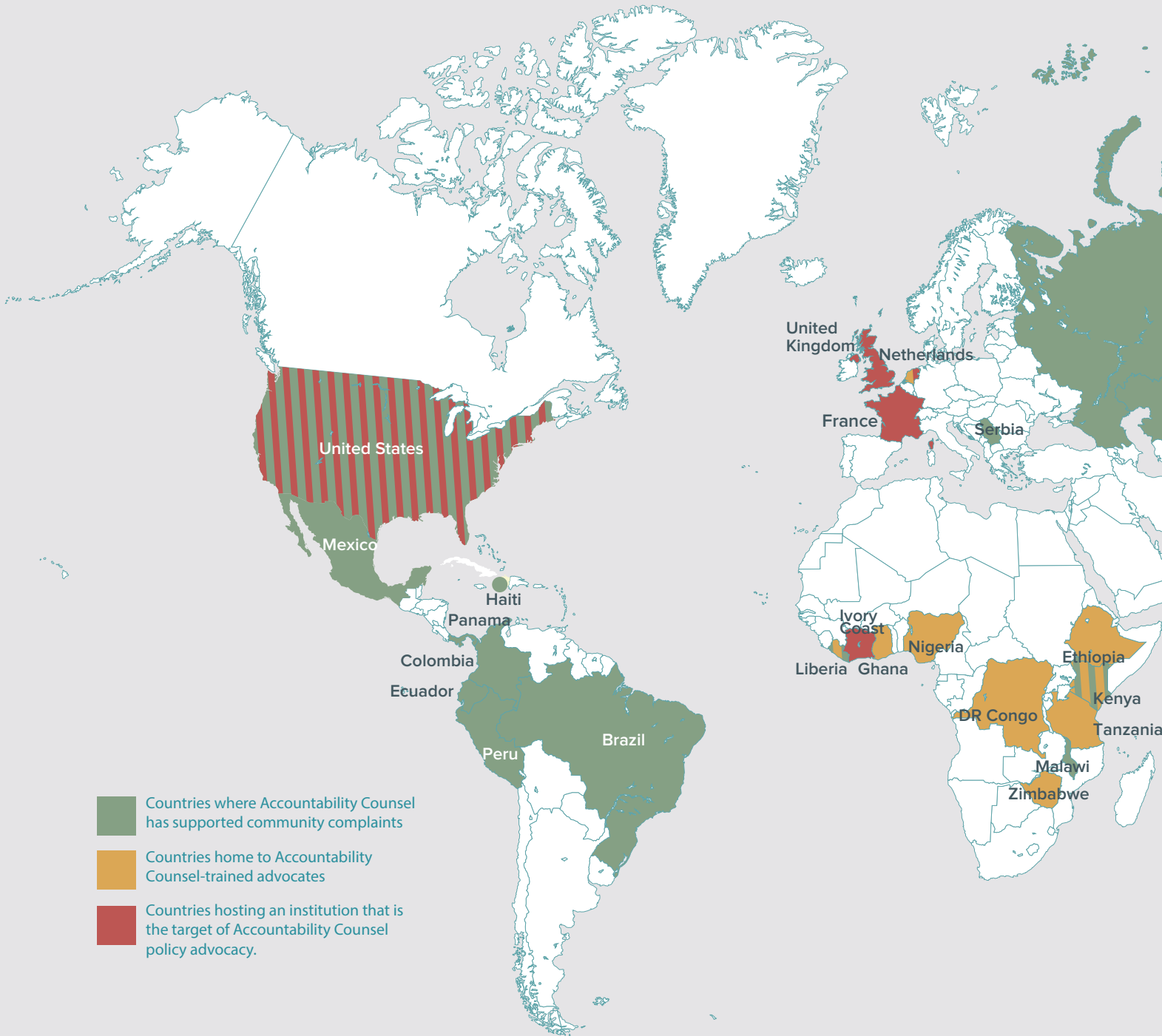
With thanks,



Natalie Bridgeman Fields
Founder & Executive Director



WHERE WE WORK





The Challenge

Corporations, international institutions, and governments are massively engaged in development activities around the world. International financial institutions alone invest \$500 billion each year in projects such as dams, mines, and oil pipelines. Despite having rules that are meant to protect the people and places affected by such projects, corporations, international institutions, and governments often engage in development that fails to respect the human and environmental rights of those very communities. When those rules are ignored, people have the right to demand justice by appealing to the accountability office of the institution that funded the project. However, because people face cultural, knowledge, language, and other barriers, accountability offices work best when communities are supported to use them effectively. We estimate that 1.3 billion people are in need of the investigation and mediation services that accountability offices offer.

Unique avenues for justice exist, but barriers are high.

The Solution

Accountability Counsel's lawyers support communities to use over two dozen of the world's accountability offices effectively and advocate to ensure that they are fair and effective tools for justice. We forge paths to justice by supporting the creation of new accountability offices where gaps exist. We foster the network needed to support the global movement for accountability through research, information, and training.

We bridge barriers to justice through expert legal counsel, policy advocacy, and a supportive network.

HOW WE WORK



ORGANIZATIONAL SNAPSHOT AT 6 YEARS

Held accountable in multilateral finance alone:

\$500 billion

35

Countries reached

8

Complaint Offices

61 subject of AC advocacy

\$105,762

average annual *pro bono* contribution

90 students and lawyers have donated their time to Accountability Counsel

Full-time team members + 7 board members

12 used in AC-supported cases

{ 1 }

Accountability Counsel is the world's only organization solely devoted to strengthening accountability offices as a tool for justice

3

Locations:
San Francisco (est. 2009)
South Asia (est. 2012)
Washington, D.C. (est. 2015)

VALUES WE LIVE

Respect-based

Our approach identifies and addresses forms of marginalization and hierarchy that are specific to each community where we work. Our methods ensure that women, children, and other marginalized people are included as full participants in community strategies seeking accountability.

Community-driven

We only work at the request of communities that reach us through trusted networks, and our community clients lead decision-making.

Remedy-oriented

We accompany our client communities through the 'last mile' of their campaigns for justice and commit to improving the lives and environments where we work.

Knowledge-sharing

We train partner organizations as we collaborate so that they can bring their own accountability office cases, ensuring that our expertise is multiplied beyond our direct case work.

Sustainability-focused

Lessons from our cases translate into policy advocacy that creates systemic and lasting change; our advocacy to create new accountability offices creates new and ongoing opportunities for communities to seek justice.

“As an early supporter, we at Echoing Green are so proud of Accountability Counsel and the hard work the people at this small organization do to make global scale impact. We saw right away that this human rights and environmental organization had the leadership and skill to sustain and thrive.”



Cheryl Dorsey, *Echoing Green*



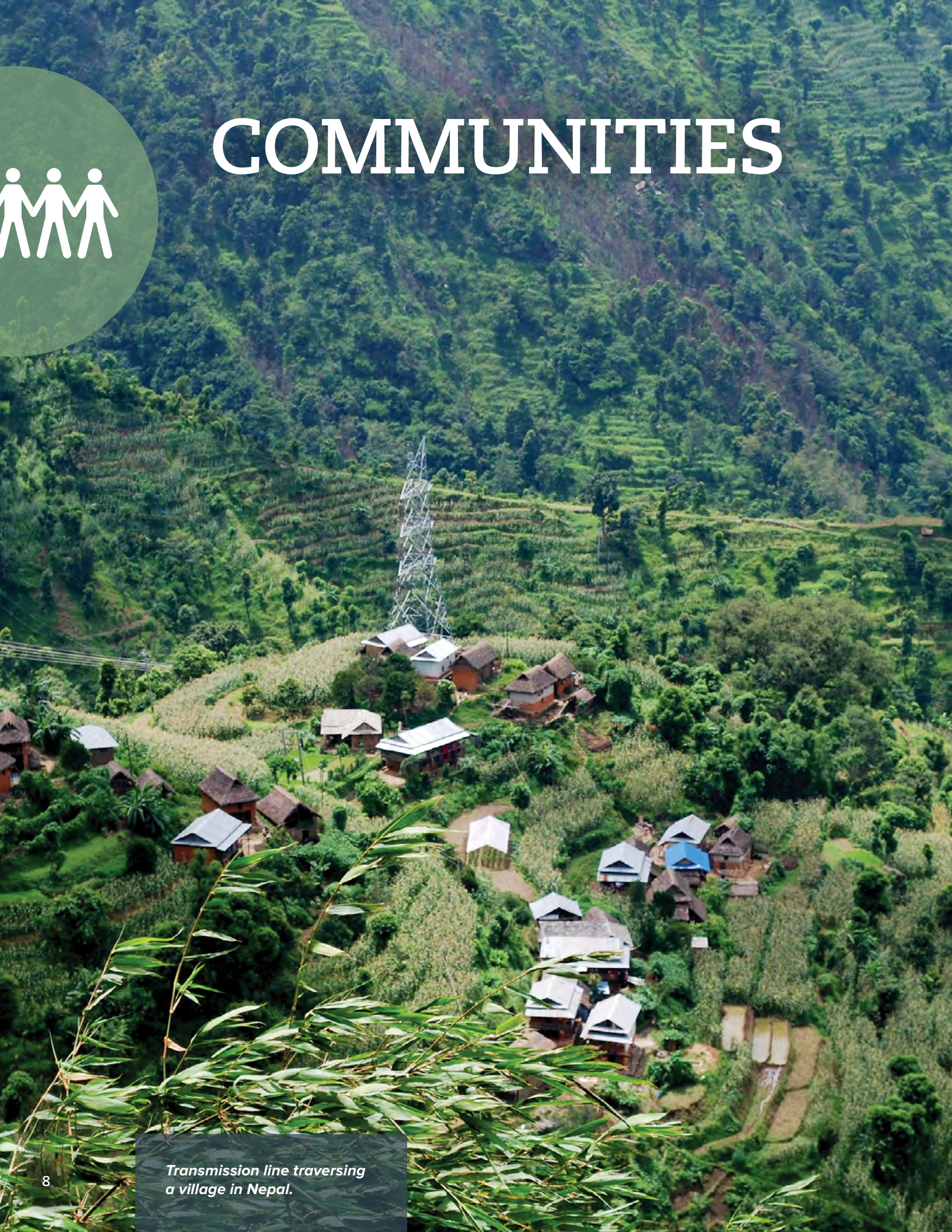
OUR RESPECT-BASED APPROACH IN ACTION

For years, groups worked in Liberia to document abuses associated with a biomass project. When communities then asked Accountability Counsel to support them through a complaint to a U.S. agency that funded the project, we applied our respect-based approach.

Because of our effort to reach out to women, girls, and other marginalized groups, our clients shared for the first time that there had been: widespread sexual abuse by company employees; gender-based workplace discrimination; and increased danger to women in childbirth; as well as additional burdens for women and girls tasked with traveling far distances to fetch water, due to water contamination. We documented these impacts in an official complaint, video, and in the media.

Our advocacy resulted in a full investigation and important commitments by the U.S. agency to ensure that these types of abuses are prevented in the future. It also sparked increased congressional oversight, including an investigation by the Government Accountability Office.

COMMUNITIES



Transmission line traversing a village in Nepal.



AMPLIFYING COMMUNITY VOICE

In our *Communities* program, we level the playing field between powerful institutions and local communities by providing legal counsel to help people understand their rights and navigate accountability offices. We provide support from initial research and drafting of complaints, to engagement with accountability office staff and leadership of financial institutions, through to the ‘last mile’ – achieving remedy as defined by our clients. We use all available strategies – from media, to detailed legal analysis, to organizing – to ensure that our work improves lives and defends rights.

We directly impact hundreds to thousands of community members through our work on each case. Our role in a case varies based on the needs and resources of each community that we assist.

We deploy our *Communities* program from two locations: San Francisco, home to our headquarters and **Strategic Support** program, where we work in close collaboration with strong local partners; and from **South Asia**, our first regional office that will serve as a model as we grow other regional offices in the years to come.

Out of our current active cases, we are pleased to bring you examples from our Strategic Support program’s work in Mongolia and Kenya and our South Asia program’s work in India and Nepal.



“Through our STRATEGIC SUPPORT PROGRAM, we work with strong local partner organizations to help communities effectively use accountability offices. Local partners take the lead in on-the-ground strategies, and we provide focused expertise and targeted assistance regarding international accountability offices. This model allows us to increase our impact by taking on a greater number of cases, and provides training to in-country partners that they can use in future cases. The type of support varies on each case, depending on the needs of our partners and client communities.”

Sarah Singh, *Director of Strategic Support*



SUPPORTING NOMADIC HERDERS IN MONGOLIA

Leveling the Playing Field Between Herders
and Powerful Corporations

For Mongolian nomadic herders in the South Gobi, their herds are the foundation of their livelihoods and culture. For centuries, they have survived in a seemingly barren landscape of scarce natural pastures fed by ephemeral rivers and groundwater. Large-scale mining in the Gobi – including Rio Tinto’s massive Oyu Tolgoi copper and gold mine and Energy Resources’ open-pit coal mine, and the roads and other infrastructure that support the mines – is now threatening the herders’ survival. These projects, financed by banks including the World Bank Group and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), are depleting water resources; causing dust, harm to animals, and destruction of pastureland; and forcibly displacing herders from their traditional sites. In response, the herders and the Mongolian organization OT Watch filed complaints to the accountability offices of the World Bank Group and the EBRD.

Our Action

At their invitation, Accountability Counsel provides ongoing support to the herders in both the World Bank Group and EBRD complaint office processes and works with a broad international coalition to influence decision-makers responsible for the investments. In 2013, our Director of Strategic Support, Sarah Singh, traveled with one of our Law Fellows to Mongolia to train the herders on negotiation techniques and prepare them for an intensive dialogue process facilitated by the World Bank Group’s Compliance Advisor Ombudsman (CAO). The herders are using our training in the ongoing dialogue with Rio Tinto around the issues raised in their complaint. We regularly provide the herders with support to advance the dialogue process, including technical advice surrounding studies and legal counsel related to agreements being negotiated with Rio Tinto and the Mongolian government.

In 2015, Sarah and Accountability Counsel attorney, Caitlin Daniel, traveled to the South Gobi to follow up on the CAO process and support herders with their EBRD complaint process. Thanks to an in-depth submission we prepared for the herders documenting violations of EBRD policies, the EBRD accountability office found

the herders’ complaint eligible. We assisted the herders as they prepared for the subsequent compliance investigation and accompanied them as accountability office investigators witnessed firsthand the harm caused by the EBRD’s investments.

Our Impact

- Our advocacy with our partners resulted in a formal U.S. government statement questioning the Oyu Tolgoi project’s social and environmental planning.
- We trained and empowered the herders to negotiate on fairer footing with Rio Tinto through the CAO process, which resulted in agreements to: (1) hire independent experts to assess mine impacts on herders’ water and livelihoods, and (2) establish a Tri-Partite Council that gives the herders an ongoing platform to negotiate issues raised in their complaint with the Government of Mongolia and the company. Our support has been instrumental to the herders’ capacity to engage critically in this process.
- The EBRD complaint was found eligible, and the herders were able to advocate on their own behalf by showing accountability investigators proof of harm from the EBRD investments.

PORTRAIT OF A CLIENT

Battsengel, a Mongolian herder, has been forced to resettle his home and herd away from his traditional settlement pattern multiple times in recent years to make way for the Oyu Tolgoi mine and related infrastructure. Unable to sustain his herd after the loss of this pastureland, he was forced to sell off the majority of his animals. This meant the loss of not only his livelihood, but also his identity as a proud herder. Accountability Counsel has been working with Battsengel and other herders to ensure his voice is heard and his culture valued.





SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES IN COASTAL KENYA

Preventing Harm from
a Coal-Fired Power Plant

Lamu County, Kenya is under threat from a vast and far-ranging infrastructure project, known as the Lamu Port-South Sudan-Ethiopia Transport Corridor (LAPSSET). The project, supported by the African Development Bank, will have significant human rights and environmental impacts across Northern Kenya. Communities in Lamu are particularly concerned about two elements of the LAPSSET project: a multi-berth port already under construction and a planned coal-fired power plant, both of which are moving forward without properly protecting human rights and the environment. Community focus is currently on the coal plant, which, if completed, will be the first coal-fired power plant in Kenya.

The potential impacts of a coal power plant on the Lamu coastline are grave: highly valuable mangrove forests are under threat of destruction; marine populations will likely decline if the plant's cooling water is discharged into the nearby bay; and community health will likely be degraded by water, air, and land pollution. Local communities, including indigenous people, also face a loss of livelihood and traditional ways of life. The current location of the plant would displace communities from land that has been used for generations for hunting, gathering, and seasonal farming. More than 3,000 artisanal and indigenous fisherfolk could lose access to their traditional fishing grounds. The impacts will also likely be felt in nearby Lamu Old Town, a World Heritage Site and the oldest and best-preserved Swahili settlement in East Africa.

Communities have not been meaningfully consulted on this project. As plans for construction move forward, communities have yet to receive any detailed proposal for minimizing, mitigating, or compensating for these potentially severe impacts.

Our Action

Since early 2012, we have been supporting Save Lamu, a local, community-based organization that brings together dozens of civil society organizations in Lamu County and directly supports affected communities.

In 2013, Accountability Counsel made an initial trip to visit affected communities and hold information and training sessions with a range of community organizations, including a coalition of civil society organizations from across Northern Kenya, all of whom will be affected by the LAPSSET project.

More recently, Accountability Counsel has assisted Save Lamu to voice community concerns directly with the African Development Bank, a potential financial sponsor of activities related to the coal power plant. We have also raised community concerns with key actors in the U.S. government who oversee the Bank. Over the coming months, we will be conducting a detailed analysis and critique of the environmental and social impact of the coal power plant; documenting policy violations; and supporting Save Lamu's work to ensure that local people know their options for addressing the harm.

Our Impact

- Local community-based organizations have increased capacity as a result of our training sessions and are organizing around advocacy strategies.
- Our research has helped communities get information about anticipated impacts, financing, and what rules apply, both regarding the larger LAPSSET project and the coal plant.
- As a result of our support, Save Lamu is better able to voice community concerns regarding the coal plant in the language of violations of African Development Bank policy and has established an ongoing dialogue directly with the Bank.
- Our advocacy has helped ensure that the U.S. government will closely monitor the African Development Bank's involvement in the coal project.





DEFENDING RIGHTS OF TEA WORKERS IN INDIA

Holding the International Finance Corporation
Accountable for Abusive Plantation Conditions

For workers on tea plantations in Assam, India, the company controls everything about their lives, often through coercion and abuse. Workers in this notoriously abusive sector face intimidation for talking to outsiders, or even one another, about their deplorable living and working conditions. Paid less than \$2 a day, workers are not able to meet their basic needs. The search for a better life has led to children, primarily young girls, being trafficked far from their homes.

Our Action

Accountability Counsel is supporting a complaint to the accountability office of the World Bank Group’s International Finance Corporation, the company’s investor. We advocate for the rights of tea workers on three plantations in close collaboration with PAJHRA, an Adivasi-led rights organization whose staff come from families that have worked on the tea plantations for generations; People’s Action for Development, a group seeking justice for Adivasis in Assam; and the human rights organization Nazdeek. Our work has involved fact-finding, documentation of abuses, detailed legal analysis, media support, and training for tea workers and local advocates on how to navigate the accountability process. The complaint resulted in an independent investigation, with a final report expected in early 2016.

Our Impact

- The World Bank Group’s compliance office is conducting a full public investigation into the abuses.
- Our campaign to hold the company accountable resulted in coverage in nearly every major domestic and international news outlet, including the BBC, New York Times, and Financial Times.
- The company agreed to conduct its own internal investigation into abuses on the plantations.
- Though much improvement is still required, the company, owned by Tata Global Beverages, has already made some progress in improving plantation living conditions, and workers are hopeful that the independent investigation will create further improvements to living and working conditions.



“Our SOUTH ASIA PROGRAM provides assistance to communities within the focused geographic area. We work closely with each community and walk with them through every stage of the complaint process, from gathering and documenting information on the ground to community trainings and accompaniment at every critical moment. We have developed an understanding of the particular challenges that communities in the region face and can support communities to develop a nuanced case strategy that fits this reality.”



Komala Ramachandra, South Asia Director



DEFENDING INDIGENOUS RIGHTS IN NEPAL

Challenging a World Bank-Funded
Transmission Line

In 2013, security forces brutally beat indigenous women in Nepal who were peacefully protesting the construction of a World Bank-funded power line, which was set to displace community members from their homes and land. They had dared to speak out after project officials, in violation of Bank rules, had failed to consult with them or provide even basic information to local people about the project and their forced displacement. The planned route for the transmission line covers residential and urban areas, as well as a number of schools.

Our Action

In partnership with a Nepal-based organization, the Lawyers' Association for Human Rights of Nepalese Indigenous Peoples, we are defending the rights of these indigenous villagers even as project officials threaten to complete the project over their objections. We assisted the communities to file a complaint to the World Bank's Inspection Panel in July 2013 and, in response, the Bank agreed to an action plan to address violations of Bank policy. The Bank has since failed to deliver on many of its action plan obligations and the Inspection Panel stepped in to launch a formal investigation into the project in May 2014.

In July 2014, South Asia Director, Komala Ramachandra, traveled to Nepal to support communities during the Inspection Panel's field visit to the project area. In July 2015, the Inspection Panel released their final investigation report finding the World Bank violated rights to information, consultation, rehabilitation, and resettlement. They also found the World Bank failed to assess alternatives to the project design and the capacity of the implementing agency. We continue to support communities to ensure that the Panel's findings are implemented and changes are made to the project.

Our Impact

- World Bank staff committed to implementation of an action plan to address community concerns and the Panel's finding of violations, and they made assurances that security forces would not be deployed for project implementation.
- The Inspection Panel conducted a full investigation into the Bank's violations of social and environmental rules, finding major violations in a public report.
- In response to the Panel's report, the Bank required its staff to provide a mediated forum for the Nepalese government and our clients to address remaining issues.





POLICY ADVOCACY



Director of Strategic Support, Sarah Singh, speaking with Accountability Counsel clients in Liberia.



CATALYZING SYSTEMIC CHANGE

Our policy work divides into three categories that work toward our overall goal of systemic policy change to ensure accountability in international finance and development:



“Accountability offices are only as effective as we demand them to be. Our policy work focuses on ensuring that accountability offices – on paper and in practice – are independent, fair, transparent, professional, accessible, and effective.”

Kindra Mohr, *Policy Director*



TRANSLATING CASE LESSONS INTO POLICY CHANGE

Many of our cases present issues that require follow-through with policy advocacy. These issues can relate to changes needed at the broadest levels of global governance, at the institutional level, or at the accountability office. In the past three years, our *Communities* program work in Liberia and Haiti has translated into system-wide impacts at a U.S. federal agency and its accountability office, as well as into World Bank policy advocacy.

Liberia Case Translates Into Change at U.S. Agency

The Buchanan Renewables biomass project in Liberia, funded by the U.S. agency Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC), drove hundreds of Liberians deeper into poverty. The project destroyed livelihoods, contaminated water, and resulted in sexual abuse and workers’ rights violations.

Accountability Counsel’s Strategic Support attorneys and Liberian partners assisted our Liberian clients in filing a complaint to OPIC and launched a comprehensive advocacy campaign that resulted in a major investigation by the OPIC Office of Accountability. The investigation confirmed the harm our client communities suffered as a result of the project and revealed that OPIC had failed to identify and protect vulnerable groups. Unfortunately, faced with this evidence of wrongdoing, OPIC’s response failed to appropriately address the findings in the investigation report. Furthermore, after delivering his report, the Director of the Office of Accountability completed his term, and the office has been left completely *unstaffed*. In the meantime, communities experiencing harm from OPIC-supported projects have no functional place to turn for accountability.

Our Action

Through meetings with congressional leaders and a public campaign, we brought these two issues, OPIC’s inadequate response and failure to staff its accountability office to the attention of key policymakers with oversight over OPIC.

Our Impact

U.S. Congress passed legislation in late 2014 that did two important things. First, it required OPIC to fill the vacant Office of Accountability position. Second, it required OPIC to report back to Congress on progress implementing recommendations in the Office of Accountability Liberia report.



Accountability Counsel client in Liberia



Mining protest in Haiti (Photo credit: Peterson Derolus)

Haiti Case Uncovers Loophole in World Bank Policy

The World Bank provided technical assistance to the Haitian government to reform mining laws in a way that will encourage large-scale gold mining in Haiti for the first time. To date, the Haitian legislative process has not included meaningful consultation with affected communities and the draft law that has been developed lacks adequate social and environmental protections. Haitian community groups fear that their government does not have adequate capacity to monitor or regulate the mining industry, and the World Bank has done nothing to increase this capacity. This means that the Bank violates its own social and environmental policies.

In collaboration with the Global Justice Clinic at NYU School of Law, Accountability Counsel supported Haitian communities and the Haitian Mining Justice Collective in their efforts to hold the World Bank accountable by filing a complaint to the World Bank Inspection Panel. However, in early 2015, the Inspection Panel declined to register the complaint, despite acknowledging the serious human rights and environmental risks of the Bank’s support. The reason? The Bank provided support through a little-known “Bank executed trust fund,” through which safeguard rules would not apply. The Panel argued that because the safeguards did not apply, it could not investigate.

Our Action

On March 9, 2015, we rallied 92 organizations and advocates to demand that the World Bank take responsibility in Haiti and close this egregious loophole that allows the Bank to evade its own safeguard policies and any accountability for Bank actions. The Bank’s response was woefully inadequate, refusing to take responsibility in Haiti or acknowledge that the safeguards loophole is problematic.

Our Impact

- This loophole is now one of the main talking points about change needed in the current global review of the World Bank safeguard policies. The Haiti case is an example of the Bank evading compliance with its own rules.
- The Bank’s own Inspection Panel mentioned the Haiti case in its letter to the Bank’s Board as an example of a problem that should be addressed in the revision of the Bank’s safeguard policies.





STRENGTHENING ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICES

There are frequent attempts, ranging from explicit to subconscious, to weaken accountability offices by the institutions that house them. If designed well, an accountability office’s rules will lessen or prevent challenges to its fair functioning. Throughout our policy work, we use the **six principles** below to guide our advocacy. Where formal policy reviews offer an opportunity to address issues, and when we see or anticipate problems, we respond.

PRINCIPLES GOVERNING OUR POLICY ADVOCACY



What’s At Stake?

Voices amplified or muted? Rights defended or abused? There are communities whose access to justice depends on our work to uphold each of these **six principles**.

For example, a power project forcibly displaces a community in a remote area of Tajikistan from their land. They only learn about their rights when it is too late to file a complaint to an accountability office. Our work to increase **accessibility** at that accountability office could make the difference in their struggle.

If we influence the bank that financed the power line to change the rules of their accountability office by extending the time allowed to file complaints, as we did at the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, this may mean the Tajik community will have the chance to raise their complaint. In an otherwise repressive regime where human rights lawyers are detained, this rule change could mean the only chance the community has to receive compensation, ensuring transparency and oversight of the project, and protecting the community’s rights. While we may have no direct connection to this hypothetical Tajik community, similar actual communities are the beneficiaries of the systemic policy change our work has influenced in order to uphold these **six principles**.

Our Impact

In the past three years, we have provided policy advice to 13 accountability offices and institutions, as well as the system of 45 OECD National Contact Points. Although a number of troubling issues remain in the revised policies governing these accountability offices, our comments contributed to positive change that is being felt in practice, not just on paper.

Here are examples of some of the concrete results we have seen from our advocacy:

- In 2013, we took part in a public consultation on a revised policy governing the accountability office of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). Our input led to seven important policy changes, ranging from an extension of the time people have to file a complaint – which increased **accessibility** – to preserving the right of complainants to respond to the Bank’s plan to address violations of the Bank’s policies – which fosters **fairness**.
- We took a leading role in the reviews of the accountability offices of the African and Inter-American Development Banks. While in both cases we see a great deal of work required for these policies to meet best practice, a total of 30 of our comments on improving **independence, transparency, accessibility, and effectiveness** were taken on board. For example, the African

Development Bank improved **independence** by adopting our recommendation on post-employment bans for the accountability office’s director and experts, thereby preventing them from taking a position at the AfDB after their term. This change is essential to protect the office from outside influence. The Inter-American Development Bank has increased **transparency**, by doing away with their previously secretive “registration” phase, and **effectiveness**, by streamlining their eligibility assessment, which used to force complainants to go through duplicative, arduous eligibility screenings.

- In 2014, we initiated a campaign regarding how staff of the World Bank Inspection Panel are hired. Through a Council on Foreign Relations blog and direct advocacy with the Inspection Panel and World Bank Board, we were able to influence the hiring process for the Panel’s Executive Secretary to ensure greater **independence**.



Accountability Counsel’s Executive Director, Natalie Bridgeman Fields, with Rep. Nancy Pelosi, Director of EarthRights International Katie Redford, Professor David Hunter, and Director of Bank Information Center Chad Dobson





WE WORK TO STRENGTHEN ACCOUNTABILITY AT THE FOLLOWING

MULTILATERAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

African Development Bank
Asian Development Bank
European Bank for Reconstruction
& Development

European Investment Bank
Inter-American Development Bank
World Bank Group Institutions

UNITED NATIONS AGENCIES

United Nations Development Programme
United Nations Green Climate Fund

NATIONAL EXPORT PROMOTION AGENCIES

Australian Export Finance &
Insurance Corporation (EFIC)
Brazilian Development Bank
Canadian export promotion agencies
German Investment Corporation (DEG)

Japanese export promotion agencies
Netherlands Development Finance
Company (FMO)
U.S. Overseas Private Investment
Corporation

ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT

45 OECD National Contact Points based in OECD adhering countries

LEVERAGE THROUGH EXPERTISE

Other organizations have endorsed policy positions authored by Accountability Counsel

458

times over the past 3 years.

ENDORISING ORGANIZATIONS INCLUDE: Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International
Sierra Club, Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth, AFL-CIO, and Oxfam International



Residents walk along the Limbe River near Camp Coq, Haiti (Photo credit Veerle Opgenhaffen)

FORGING PATHS TO JUSTICE THROUGH NEW ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICES

In order to have a true system of global accountability, it isn't enough to catalyze best practice within existing accountability offices. Given the reach of global finance and the emergence of new economic actors, we work to create robust and effective accountability offices in institutions where they do not yet exist.

Leading the creation of one of the newest accountability offices

- Since April 2012, Accountability Counsel and our partners have played a leading role in advocating for the new accountability office at the **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)**. UNDP launched its office in January 2015.
- We continue to provide guidance to UNDP and conduct outreach to inform communities about the office's services.

Promoting access to remedy in emerging financial institutions

- We provide strategic guidance on the development of the new accountability framework within the **Green Climate Fund (GCF)**, a \$1 billion/year venture to support low emission and climate resilient projects in developing countries. This framework can serve as a pathway to justice for communities that are harmed by GCF-supported projects.
- Accountability Counsel works with partners around the world to push for the creation of strong safeguards and accountability offices at two new development banks, the **Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)** and **New Development Bank (NDB)**.

Ensuring accountability within U.S. agencies

- Accountability Counsel advocates to leaders on Capitol Hill and in the White House for the creation of accountability offices within agencies that support international development and trade/export promotion activities. Agencies such as the **U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)**, the **U.S. Export-Import Bank**, the **U.S. Trade and Development Agency (USTDA)**, and the **Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC)** have no accountability office despite the reach of the activities they support.
- We have provided multiple submissions to the U.S. State Department and actively participated in the development of a **U.S. National Action Plan (NAP) for Responsible Business Conduct**. The NAP provides another avenue for demanding access to remedy for business-related human rights abuses.



RESOURCES



*International Advocates'
Working Group, Annual
Retreat 2015*



RESOURCING ADVOCATES WITH KNOWLEDGE AND NETWORKS

Our *Resources* program is where we ensure that our unique skills and knowledge have a wider reach and deeper impact. This program provides not only our own staff, but civil society colleagues and the people who make up the movement for accountability more broadly, with concrete tools. These tools include dissemination of our research, publications, trainings for advocates and *pro bono* lawyers, technical guides to accountability offices, and provision of a network for communication and collaboration.






**NETWORK
ENGAGEMENT**

In 2013, we collaborated with our civil society colleagues to launch two important milestones in building a network of advocates focused on accountability offices.

We partnered with Human Rights Watch and the Center for International Environmental Law to host the first ever convening of civil society groups in conversation with the key actors at all of the world’s major accountability offices. The **Civil Society Roundtable** was held in Washington, D.C., and coincided with the annual meeting of accountability office leaders. A number of accountability office participants reported that it was the most useful event of their annual meeting, and in response, we turned the convening into a recurring annual event, repeated in 2014 in London and 2015 in Paris.

Accountability Counsel launched the **International Advocates’ Working Group**. The goal is for people whose work supports communities to use the world’s accountability offices to have a forum for learning and joint action. To date, over 80 participants representing civil society from Asia, Latin America, Africa, and Europe have joined the network. A core group holds regular conference calls, meet in person, and had our first annual retreat in October 2015.

Accountability Counsel also participates as an active member in the following networks: **African Coalition for Corporate Accountability, Coalition for Human Rights in Development, OECD Watch, NGO Forum on ADB, BankTrack, International Corporate Accountability Roundtable, and ESCR-Net.**




**RESEARCH &
PUBLICATIONS**

In 2015, as part of our collaborative work in the OECD Watch network, Accountability Counsel’s Caitlin Daniel was a lead author of a report titled **‘Remedy Remains Rare.’** Published by OECD Watch, the report reviews the first 15 years of the OECD National Contact Point system and recommends changes to help this network of accountability offices reach its full potential. Caitlin was one of the presenters of the report at the Annual Meeting of National Contact Points in Paris, and the recommendations from that report remain a platform for ongoing advocacy.

Also in 2015, Accountability Counsel took a leading role in collecting and analyzing data for a forthcoming report we drafted with a coalition of civil society organizations. Titled **‘Glass Half Full?,’** the report assesses accountability office performance based on carefully compiled case data, user surveys, and a sampling of recent case studies. One of the major findings in the report shows that civil society organization involvement in cases appears to have a strong, positive effect on case outcomes. This finding has two major implications. First, it demonstrates the critical need for our organization, but second, it shows the problematic barriers to access that are preventing groups without support from effective use of accountability offices. Caitlin presented the statistical findings of the report to accountability offices from around the world at their annual meeting in Paris in 2015.

For the sixth consecutive year, we undertook a **Benchmarking Project**, in which we gathered data on the policies of every major accountability office, benchmarking them against one another to enable us to see best practice, trends, places where advocacy is needed in our *Policy* program, and to provide information to our Communities Program attorneys.



TRAININGS & GUIDES

We recently produced the Eighth Edition of our **Accountability Resource Guide**. The Guide, referred to by civil society colleagues as “the Bible” in our field, provides information about how to use all of the world’s main accountability offices.

In the past three years, we have **directly trained** advocates in 18 countries regarding how to use accountability offices.



PARTNERING WITH SOMO ON TRAININGS AND GUIDES

We are pleased to have partnered frequently in our *Resources* program with the Netherlands-based Center for Research on Multinational Corporations, or SOMO for its Dutch acronym. For example, in 2013, we partnered on a series of civil society trainings in Kenya and Indonesia. The comprehensive three-day training on grievance mechanisms in Kenya brought together 21 activists and human rights practitioners from across Africa. In Indonesia, the four-day training included 20 participants from all over Asia.

SOMO has also supported Accountability Counsel to author “how to” guides specific to the World Bank and Asian and African Development Bank accountability offices.

Pro Bono Partners

Accountability Counsel engages *pro bono* lawyers to increase our leverage and impact. We are pleased to have partnered with the following law firms and individual attorneys over the past three years.

Accountability Counsel works with *pro bono* lawyers on a variety of projects. This year, we gave our first annual **Partner in Justice** award to the law firm **Nixon Peabody** for their outstanding *pro bono* commitment to working with us to support our clients in Liberia and Colombia.

Covington & Burling LLP
Nixon Peabody LLP
Wilson, Sonsini, Goodrich
& Rosati
Alyson Finley

Anabel Lee
Gideon Kracov
Greg Freemon
Shea Loewen
Skye Bougsty Marshall



Ryan Lincoln of Nixon Peabody and Accountability Counsel's Natalie Bridgeman Fields

OUR VISION

What's Coming Next: Our Long-Term Vision for Scale

- We envision Accountability Counsel as an organization **deeply networked** with civil society organizations at grassroots, regional, and international levels to ensure a global system of accountability.
- We are working now to build internal systems and grow **five additional global offices** in Africa, Latin America, Eastern Europe, Middle East/North Africa, and East Asia/Pacific.
- Regional offices will provide **direct community advocacy** & will be **support centers** for local organizations. Our headquarters-based Strategic Support program will continue to fill gaps that are not covered as we grow, in addition to continuing cases that are more suitable to Strategic Support work.
- **Policy advocates** will operate in close coordination with colleagues across the globe to ensure systemic change. A groundswell of cases brought through deeper regional support will fuel this policy change.
- Our **Resources** program will support a network of advocates, contribute with regular data collection and reporting on accountability, and will serve as a training hub for partners and *pro bono* lawyers.
- Over the next decade, we aim to fully **scale** and then **stabilize** with an \$8M annual budget serving all 1.3 billion people who need accountability in development finance.

WHY I SUPPORT ACCOUNTABILITY COUNSEL

“I have long been deeply impressed with the dedication and focus of Natalie and team at Accountability Counsel, and am honored to contribute to their work. While it can be easy to forget at times, we are a global community. What affects one ultimately will affect us all, regardless of location. Accountability Counsel proactively provides resources and voice to some of the most underserved populations on the planet, and does so in a manner that is non-intrusive to the communities themselves and respectful to all stakeholders. To me these are efforts that are easy to support.”

Luke Liss, *Attorney*



OUR PEOPLE

Staff

Natalie Bridgeman Fields
Founder & Executive Director

Kindra Mohr
Policy Director

Sarah Singh
Director of Strategic Support

Komala Ramachandra
South Asia Director

Caitlin Daniel
Staff Attorney

Anirudha Nagar
South Asia Consultant

Lani Inverarity
*Strategic Support Associate**

Molly Armstrong
Operations Coordinator

With special thanks to our 2014 South Asia Associate, **Delphia Lim**, via a year-long Harvard Law School Irving R. Kaufman Public Interest Fellowship

Sept. 2012–Aug. 2015 Law Fellows & Interns

Aaron Voit
UC Berkeley School of Law

Amanda Swenson
Princeton University

Biola Macauley
Stanford University

Brianna Krong
Wellesley College

Christine Dutko
UC Berkeley School of Law

Christine Zülow
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UC Berkeley School of Law

Law School Clinical Program Partners

Berkeley Law International Human Rights Law Clinic

Janet Martinez
Senior Lecturer in Law and Faculty Director, Gould Negotiation and Mediation Program, Stanford Law School

NYU School of Law Global Justice Clinic

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Stephanie Smith
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MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR

“As a longtime supporter of human rights organizations, I am highly aware that long-term impact only happens through simultaneous advocacy at both the grassroots and the grassroots levels. I support Accountability Counsel because it is one of the few human rights organizations that uses a bifurcated strategy to effectively accomplish both of these goals at once, leveraging limited resources to take enormous strides in support of the global movement for human rights and environmental justice.”

Kathleen Kelly Janus, *Accountability Counsel Board Chair*



*Via year-long Yale Law School Robina Foundation Post-Graduate Fellowship in International Human Rights

DONORS

Our work over the past three fiscal years, from September 1, 2012 to August 31, 2015, was made possible thanks to the generous support of the following donors:

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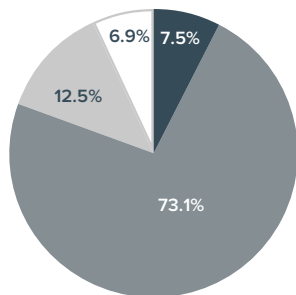
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September 1, 2012 to August 31, 2015



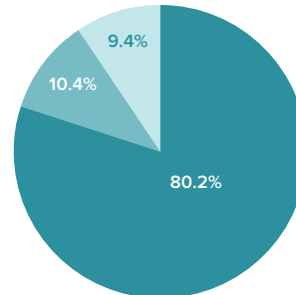
	FY 12/13	FY 13/14	FY 14/15
REVENUE			
Donations	\$321,320	\$545,520	\$843,741
In-Kind <i>Pro Bono</i> Support	\$120,873	\$74,517	\$121,896
Earned & Other Income	\$3,989	\$3,863	\$12,749
Total Revenue	\$446,182	\$623,899	\$978,386
EXPENSES			
Salary & Related Expenses	\$194,861	\$264,997	\$436,182
Other Expenses	\$209,773	\$209,914	\$292,492
Total Expenses	\$404,634	\$474,911	\$728,674
Net Income	\$41,548	\$148,988	\$249,712

FY 14/15 REVENUE



Individuals	\$73,641
Foundations	\$715,100
Pro Bono Contributions	\$121,896
Other	
Earned & Misc.	\$12,749
Released from Restrictions	\$55,000
Total Other	\$67,749
Total Revenue	\$978,386

FY 14/15 EXPENSES



Program	
Communities	\$385,395
Policy	\$152,606
Resources	\$46,765
Total Program	\$584,766
Administration	\$75,594
Fundraising	\$68,314
Total Expense	\$728,675

“I believe that no organization in the world today can lay claim to greater impact on the lives of people at risk and ecosystems in harm’s way from mismanaged development projects.”

Steve Toben, *Flora Family Foundation*

accountability
counsel

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