



## The Problem, Our Mission and Vision

Trillions of dollars are spent each year on internationally financed projects like mines, agro-industrial plantations, and wind farms. These projects often devastate vulnerable populations in their path, through impacts like forced displacement from land and livelihoods, physical abuses, and environmental degradation.

Corporations, financial institutions, and governments have rules to prevent harm to the people and places affected by these projects, but they are often violated – leaving millions of people vulnerable to harm every year. These are the people Accountability Counsel serves.

Accountability Counsel amplifies the voices of communities around the world to protect their human rights and environment. As advocates for people harmed by internationally financed projects, we employ community-driven and policy-level strategies to access justice.

We pay particular attention to the rights of Indigenous Peoples, women and girls, youth, and other marginalized groups. Our vision is that communities take part in decisions that affect them and secure remedy to realize rights; effective and robust accountability systems deter abuses; and international institutions and corporations respect communities and prevent abuses.

Our global team of nineteen is based in four locations across Asia, Africa, and North America. At scale, we plan to grow to a nearly 60-person organization, with regional teams of lawyers and local advocates working through a community-driven and coordinated global approach.



# Our Model

Our model uses a high-leverage point of influence – the accountability offices tied to international investments – to give communities a voice in the decisions affecting them. These community-driven accountability offices are often the only venues available for accessing justice, and can bypass barriers that prevent communities from raising a grievance through litigation, media campaigns, or even local organizing.

When people are harmed by internationally financed projects, accountability offices can provide efficient avenues to balance power, resolve conflicts, and deliver remedy. They can also create systemic change by helping institutions learn lessons about problematic investments, improve internal processes, and prevent harm.

Accountability Counsel’s three programs (Communities, Policy Advocacy, and Research) work in coordination to achieve our ultimate vision.





At the request of communities, lawyers in our [Communities](#) program provide people with the tools and training to use accountability offices to hold corporations and institutions accountable for harm. Our Communities program lawyers also conduct trainings and workshops to share and exchange information with local and regional groups who can use accountability office strategies.

Our [Policy](#) program advocates for systemic policy change to ensure that fair, independent, transparent, and effective accountability offices prevent abuse and provide communities with greater access to justice.

Our [Research](#) program informs the global movement for accountability in international finance through data and research tools. We convene a global network of 120 advocates from every region that works collectively to achieve change.

# Our Impact

*In our [Communities program](#), we have directly served nearly two million people facing human rights and environmental abuses. These cases exemplify how, with our support, communities have used accountability offices to demand justice and win:*

## Mexico: Oaxaca Hydroelectric

In villages in Oaxaca, we supported four Indigenous villages to achieve an historic, negotiated cessation of an OPIC-financed hydroelectric project that was causing harm in violation of OPIC policy. As a direct result of our work, the thousands of people that make up these Indigenous Chinanteco communities peacefully used dispute resolution through the OPIC Office of Accountability to resolve their conflict by withholding consent for the project, thus preventing further harm.



*“I’d summarize everything with a very simple result. That thanks to this whole process and to the intervention of Accountability Counsel and all who participated, today we have the Arroyo Sal creek.”*

**Gabino Vicente,  
Indigenous Community Leader**

At a local level, the case strengthened Indigenous women's participation in community-wide decision-making, and the community successfully organized to demand that their government build a road that the company had promised, but did not deliver. Throughout, our work ensured that communities received information, spoke on their own behalf, and led the strategy that resulted in their win.

## Mongolia: South Gobi Mining

In the South Gobi, we worked alongside local partners to support traditional nomadic herders to achieve a landmark set of agreements to remedy harm caused by the IFC-financed Oyu Tolgoi (OT) gold and copper mine, managed by Rio Tinto. Through a voluntary and multi-year negotiation process, nomadic herders, OT representatives, and local government officials reached wide-ranging agreements that have entered implementation phase.



These agreements set the path for more complete compensation, improved access to water and organization of pasture resources, and represent an important step towards livelihood restoration of local herding communities. As a direct result of the agreements to date, the communities' first animal laboratory has been built, 37 children have received scholarships creating transformational educational opportunities for themselves and future generations, 114 new compensation packages have been approved for herder households that were displaced by the mine (totaling about \$945,000), and 10 herder wells have been furnished with solar-powered pumps.

Implementation of the agreements is still in progress, and we are publicly tracking the agreements to ensure complete and meaningful implementation.



“These agreements represent a huge amount of hard work and progress in our four years of negotiations. We will continue to be vigilant and make sure what has been agreed to is actually accomplished, but today we feel that our complaints about the negative impact of this mine on local herders are starting to be addressed in a serious way.”

**Battsengel Lkhamdoorov,  
Elected Herder Representative**

## Haiti: Caracol Industrial Park

In northeast Haiti, we supported a collective of farmers and their families (representing nearly 4,000 people) to reach a historic agreement to remedy harm resulting from a land grab for an IADB-financed industrial facility. With our in-depth legal and research support, the farmers negotiated on their own behalf to reach a remedy package that includes a combination of land, employment opportunities, agricultural equipment and training, and support for micro-enterprise focused on women and the most vulnerable members of the community.

This negotiation serves as a model for communities around the world who are working to address deep power imbalances and harm from international investment. The case has created a shift in the mindset of Haitian government officials as they confront development and displacement issues.

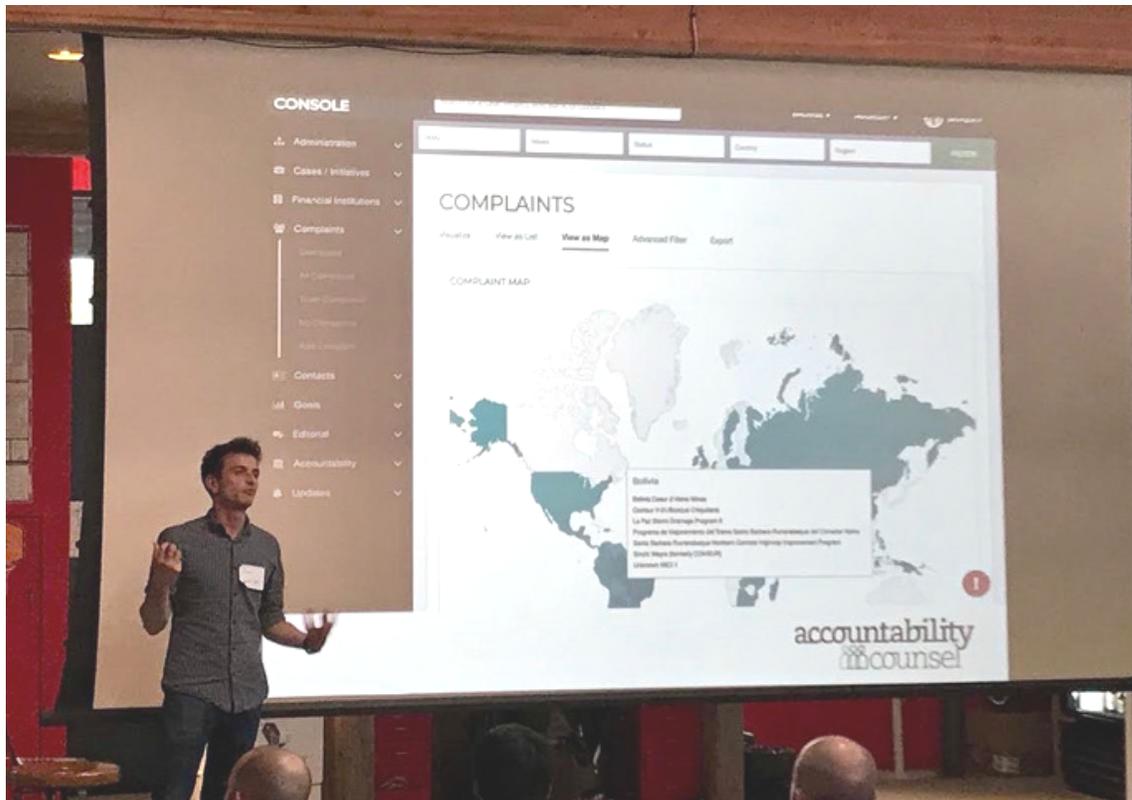


"After my land was taken from me, we women have been in a difficult situation. We've had no income for crops we used to sell. We didn't see any future. With the agreement we signed yesterday, we hope our lives will be changed."

**Seliana Marcelus,**  
**Farmers and Community Representative**

# Research Program

Our Research program is, for the first time, exposing patterns that show advocates, policy-makers, and the institutions themselves best practice and where improvement is needed. Our public database of every complaint filed to every accountability office (about 1,300 cases and built for growth) is transforming the transparency around harm from international finance and the accountability system available to address that harm. It will be public later in 2019.



# Policy Program

Our Policy program team has worked with a coalition of allies to improve the policies and practices of every major multilateral development bank, three U.S. federal agencies, and has been instrumental in the establishment of two new complaint offices at United Nations agencies that finance development projects. In addition, Accountability Counsel's work is the reason that the new U.S. International Development Finance Corporation is responsible for creating an accountability office to address community feedback about harm.

As a result of this work, more communities around the world have access to independent, transparent accountability offices where their voices can be heard, and investors can incorporate lessons learned from these cases into decision-making. We are in the process of engaging Chinese institutions and impact investors as two key segments in our efforts to ensure that all financial flows are accountable to the people they impact.

**accountability**  
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Raising Voices | Defending Rights | Demanding Justice

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