UNFUNDED LIST HONOREE:
Accountability Lab

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Honoree Proposal Description:

The Accountability Lab catalyzes a new generation of active citizens and responsible leaders around the world. They operate as an incubator for creative individuals and organizations to build innovative ideas for integrity in their communities, using arts, media, culture and technology. By enabling people to use information and knowledge to hold people in power to account, we help to unleash positive social and economic change.

Since the enclosed proposal was honored by Unfunded List, Accountability Lab has grown exponentially. Learn more here:

Organization Website:

http://www.accountabilitylab.org/

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WE HELP YOU CHANGE THE WORLD

The Unfunded List identifies and promotes great social change ideas that have not yet secured funding using a rigorous proposal evaluation process. 2x year, social change-makers around the world send us their best unfunded grant proposals and our committee provides candid feedback to each applicant. All proposals submitted receive helpful feedback, but only those earning the highest evaluations make the twice annual Unfunded List. The enclosed proposal is one of the featured honoree organizations named to The Unfunded List!

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The Accountability Incubator

The [Accountability Lab](#) catalyzes a new generation of active citizens and responsible leaders around the world. We operate as an incubator for creative individuals and organizations to build innovative ideas for integrity in their communities, using arts, media, culture and technology. By enabling people to use information and knowledge to hold people in power to account, we help to unleash positive social and economic change.

Background

A lack of accountability and the rule of law- across governments, businesses and civil society- is at the heart of many development challenges. It leads to corruption, poverty and inequality. We've worked on these issues for over three years with thousands of citizens. Our experience, and that of others, indicates clearly that when people work together to strengthen accountability this can lead to real, positive changes in their lives.

At the same time, however, we've also realized through experience that it is very difficult for citizens to build accountability and the rule of law. It is a long, hard process, and it requires creative approaches to entrenched political, social and economic dynamics.

There are three central problems. First, support for accountability efforts tends to be short-term and driven by available funding streams- meaning these initiatives often lack sustainability and ownership. Secondly, there are rarely incentives to try new, innovative approaches to accountability from the bottom-up, which leads to the repetition of projects that show little impact. Finally, not nearly enough effort is put into supporting accountability "eco-systems"- so the opportunity is missed to transform individual projects into a larger movement.

The Accountability Incubator

The Accountability Lab is uniquely placed to play a leading role in changing these dynamics through catalytic support for youth focused, creative accountability efforts. The Accountability Incubator is the Lab's flagship initiative- a two year program for young civil society change-makers (or "accountapreneurs" as we call them) to build out sustainable, effective tools for accountability, participation and social impact. It is these committed change-makers who know best how to transform their communities. We support them to make it happen.

Akin to a business incubator for the private sector, the Lab helps accountapreneurs develop the tools, skills, networks, outreach efforts and funding streams they need for success. The support is high-touch and sustained over time; flexible and adaptive according to context; and focuses clearly on collaboration and building the community as a whole as much as individual ideas.

Impact to Date

The first class of 12 accountapreneurs in Liberia and Nepal will graduate from the Incubator at the end of 2015. The impact has been significant both for the individual ideas and the accountability community in these countries as a whole. These change-makers have done everything from efforts to build community justice from the bottom up; to using music for integrity; to starting the first film school for accountability. The initiatives have begun to shift conversations and policies. For example, they have spurred the government of Liberia to push forward its commitments for transparency as part of the Open Government Partnership. The average "return on investment" for the accountapreneurs (the amount we have helped them leverage our initial investment) is at least x5, with many already sustainable independently. These are low-cost, high-impact initiatives that build real change over time.

Impact Measurement

Monitoring and impact measurement is predicated on the idea of adaptive learning- with feedback from the accountapreneurs collected on a consistent basis to allow for iteration and improvement over time. We work as hard as we can to communicate our impact in meaningful ways. We also work closely with the accountapreneurs to develop clear tools for measuring the impact of their work as it develops.

Moving Forwards

After a competitive process in the 2nd half of 2015, the next class of accountapreneurs will be chosen for the Accountability Incubator in Liberia, Nepal, Pakistan and possibly Nigeria. We are also working to build the community of accountapreneurs through our leading role in the OpenGov Hub, through advocacy activities, and through engagement in international initiatives related to these issues.

Internal Accountability

We also strive to set a radical example for transparency and integrity with our own operations. 100% of data on how we spend our money, all documents on our internal governance and all presentations are made available to the public. This helps us to be more accountable for the money we receive, helps our partners plan their support more effectively, and- hopefully- sets an example for other organizations.