MZALENDO

2021+4

STRATEGIC PLAN

Executive Summary

Mzalendo ('Patriot' in Swahili) Trust (here-after 'Mzalendo') is a Kenyan non-partisan Parliamentary monitoring organization (PMO) whose mission is to "promote the realization of open, inclusive, and account-able Parliaments across Kenya and Africa". We do so by creating and managing civic tech tools, producing evidence-based re-search, and leading and facilitating advo-cacy and partnerships with Parliaments, citizens and other relevant stakeholders. We believe that success in our work will build more effective and responsive leg-islation and political processes that ulti-mately support Kenya's national develop-ment goals.

Mzalendo's 2021-2025 strategy compris-es three broad thematic objectives that reflect the key principles of openness, in-clusion and accountability under-girding COK, 2010.

Under "Promoting and Monitoring Legis-lative Openness", we will champion access to Parliamentary information through the use of technology. Using our web platform, we plan to increase engage-ment between representatives and their constituents at all levels of government, maintaining our work to share and mon-itor information from Parliament (the National Assembly and the Senate), while for the first time rolling out the legislative trackers in select county level assemblies.

Under "Promoting Inclusive Parliaments and Political Processes", we will champion the inclusion of women, youth, persons with disabilities (PwD) and other margin-alized groups in Parliamentary and polit-ical processes. We will also engage Par-liamentary caucuses, political parties, the media, women- and youth-led or -focused civil society organizations to promote and monitor the progress of inclusive legisla-tion, develop evidence-based research to inform decision making processes, and provide action-oriented dialogue oppor-tunities between citizens and political actors.

Under "Promoting Civic Engagement, Scrutiny and Accountability of Parliament", we will build public participation in (and citizen oversight of) Parliaments, and more consultative and responsive political processes. We shall do this by developing tools for participation and consultation, coordinating civil society engagement with Parliament under the umbrella of Kenya's Civil Society Parliamentary Engagement Network (CSPEN) that we facilitate, and leading research and analysis on the performance of Parliaments at national and county levels (as well as on civic space issues).

Our 2021-2025 strategy takes stock of the strong comparative advantage we have built over more than a decade of work. Among other aspects, we are Kenya's only PMO, so we enjoy deep expertise in civic technology tools and a capital of trust and respect from Parliament and other stakeholders. These considerations continue to shape and inform all our efforts under this strategy.

As we embark on our next phase, it is important that we build on progress and impacts we have seen in our work to date. For instance, we will continue to provide comprehensive information on Parliamentary activities on our platforms to help citizens access information about their MPs. We will also continue releasing annual independent Parliamentary scorecard to track and encourage the performance of Parliament, and hold annual People's Shujaaz Awards that showcase MPs that champion public interest issues in Parliament. We will continue working for the inclusion of the marginalized groups in elective positions in Parliament and advancing legislation that addresses their perspectives, as we have done to date through flagship research on women, youth and young women in politics and by successfully securing legislation on youth employment. Finally, we will continue to improve and evolve *Dokeza and Bonga-na-Mzalendo,* our web and SMS platforms to facilitate and increase citizens' inputs into legislation under consid-

eration by Parliament and public inter-est debates respectively. Our evidence, collected through a methodologically rigorous and independently facilitated outcome harvesting evaluation, demon-strated that stakeholders (duty bearers, CSOs, media) access and use our flagship research, websites and civic tech tools to inform their work and better fulfill their social roles.

Our new strategy inevitably takes stock of the changing context we face now and in the years to come, in Kenya and globally. Chief among them is the need to con-tinue work on the full realization of the principles of transparency, inclusion, and accountability enshrined in the Kenyan Constitution. For instance, despite the encouraging passage of a Public Partic-ipation Bill by the Senate in May 2019, a similar Bill before the National Assembly still awaits passage, as do guidelines to operationalize the provisions of approved legislation. Similarly, despite robust con-stitutional provisions that seek to secure their inclusion in both the elective and appointive positions across all public gov-ernance spaces, women, youth, PwD and other marginalized groups are still critical-ly underrepresented and constitutional-ly-stipulated targets remain unmet.

The Covid-19 pandemic has also signifi-cantly impacted governance processes in Kenya. On the one hand it amplified already worsening civic space trends. This calls on us to be a more vocal player on any action that could stifle independent voices in Parliament, civil society and me-dia. But the pandemic also created new forms of online public activism and led to the adoption of virtual sittings in Parlia-ment. These changes, which take place

in a context of increasing internet pen-etration and use of social media by the Kenyan public and politicians, create new opportunities for leveraging technology for social change. We will also be mind-ful of those who do not possess a smart phone or internet connection but can leverage SMS or offline mechanisms to air their views. This will require a more active offline media engagement strategy.

The political landscape of Kenya in the coming years will inevitably have a bear-ing on our work. Specifically, we need to be an active and vigilant voice and facili-tator in major processes that could signifi-cantly alter Kenya's system of governance: the Building Bridges to Unity Initiative and the planned referendum as triggered by the Constitutional Amendment Bill. We must also play our role in informing evi-dence-based debates during the upcom-ing 2022 elections, including by working directly, from a non-partisan stance, with political parties. We hope our efforts will help inform citizens' choice on election day and help diffuse the risk of renewed electoral tensions. Our work on address-ing persistent corruption in public offices will remain critical to elevate the debate on integrity in politics, and also to help rebuild trust between people and their elected representatives.

Global initiatives like the Open Govern-ment Partnership (OGP) and the Sus-tainable Development Goals (SDGs) will remain important anchors to advance Mzalendo's priorities. We shall serve these initiatives by leveraging our role of conve-ner of target 7 of SDG 16 ("Ensure respon-sive, inclusive, participatory and represen-tative decision-making at all levels") and our role as a "supporting institution" for

the commitment on "Public Participation and Legislative Openness" that features in the 2021-2022 OGP National Action Plan (NAP) IV.

Mzalendo cannot do all these alone. The success of our work is intrinsically premised on active outreach to and collaboration with Parliament, as it is the institution with the power to support Mzalendo's agenda for better governance and greater political inclusion. We will also work with those stakeholders that hold complementary expertise or powers to support our strategic objectives. This includes political parties, independent offices and constitutional commissions, specialized civil society organizations and the media, as well as citizens, who play a critical role in eliciting accountability from elected officials all year round.

At the regional level, we will continue to exchange lessons and expertise with PMOs and regional Parliamentary caucuses across Africa. We hope this will eventually lead to joint initiatives focusing on multiple countries or on transnational Parliaments that Kenya is a member of.

This said, the bulk of our work remains at the national level, given the oversized impact that national level politics play on governance and development outcomes in Kenya. For the first time, we will begin to selectively work with a handful of county level assemblies that are committed to leading the way on transparency, inclusion and accountability reforms. We will do so primarily by replicating and adapting our existing national toolkits to the county level, in partnership with local organizations, where possible within the OGP framework. This will help us keep

this work manageable and relevant.

Finally, the realization of our strategy is premised on building a resilient Mzalendo. Doing so will require the implementation of six operational priorities:

i)   strengthening board governance and oversight through the development of a board charter, a board recruitment strategy, and the institution of board committees to support Mzalendo in key areas of work;

ii) developing systems and processes for value-driven, result-based talent recruitment and retention, including streamlined processes for recruitment and on-boarding (such as performance appraisals and reward systems for staff, inclusive of professional development opportunities);

iii) increasing funding and sustainability through the development and implementation of a funding policy and strategy;

iv) increasing brand visibility through active online and offline communication and media engagement; and

v)   institutionalizing Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Learning (MERL) processes that help us keep track of lessons and progress in realizing our objectives.

Caroline Gaita
Executive Director

Table of Contents

Acronyms

ACDEG	African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance
ADRF	Africa Digital Rights Fund
APNAC	African Parliamentary Network Against Corruption
CA	Communications Authority of Kenya
CDF	Constituency Development Fund
CIPESA	Collaboration on International ICT Policy in East and Southern Africa
COK, 2010	Constitution of Kenya, 2010
CRECO	Constitution and Reform Education Consortium
CSPEN	Civil Society Parliamentary Engagement Network
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
ELOG	Elections Observation Group
HSF	Hanns Seidel Foundation
ICNL	International Center For Not-For-Profit Law
IEBC	Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission
KEDIPA	Kenya Disability Parliamentary Association
KEWOPA	Kenya Women Parliamentary Association
KNBS	Kenya National Bureau of Statistics
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
KYPA	Kenya Young Parliamentarians Association
MERL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Learning
MPs	Members of Parliament
NAP	National Action Plan
NED	National Endowment for Democracy
NGAAF	National Government Affirmative Action Fund
NGEC	National Gender and Equality Commission
NIA	National Integrity Alliance
NIMD	Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy
OGP	Open Government Partnership
ORPP	Office of the Registrar of Political Parties
PMO	Parliamentary Monitoring Organization
PPLC	Political Parties Liaison Committee
PwD	Persons with Disability
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
ToC	Theory of Change
WFD	Westminster Foundation for Democracy

Foreword

As most great things do, it began over a drink. The two of us were catching up and reflecting on life, when – as is wont to happen in Kenyan society – the conversation turned to politics. Halfway into a Parliamentary term which Kenyans had been most optimistic about (partially thanks to the opposition's first electoral win), there was enough to complain about. Parliament's website was down and citizens had no access to or information about Members of Parliament (MPs), while MPs felt privileged and removed from citizens and discussions on their performance were non-existent.

It was a moment of epiphany. Access to MPs and Parliamentary information is a right. We and other citizens have a right to know and access Parliamentary discussions, and Kenyans in their diverse spaces were in fact already discussing the quality of leadership. What if we created a space, a resource, that brought all this together? And with that, Mzalendo.com was born.

From our beginnings trying to source data on MPs, to later projects of converting the entire hard copy Hansard into a publicly accessible PDF format, the work has been a labour of love. Despite consistent bureaucratic hurdles, a sometimes apathetic public, and a shortage of requisite resources (funding, time, labour), Mzalendo was able to continue growing and innovating. Oftentimes, we would upload the sourced information on MPs and processed Hansard in the evenings after a hard day of "real work".

We are proud to see how far we have come from our formal registration in

2013 to the launch of this Strategic Plan that seeks to refine and secure our engagement space at the sub-national, national and regional map. The Constitution of Kenya 2010 (COK, 2010) introduced important aspects of public participation, inclusion, access to information, data protection and transparency, which vindicated our initial efforts and remains a guiding light that continues to drive Mzalendo's growth and ambitions.

We are grateful to our partners – funders, staff, past and current, Parliament, members of civil society and media - who believed in us and have continued to support our work.

It fills us with great joy to toast to the next **five**.

Ory Okolloh & Conrad Akunga
Founders & Trustees, Mzalendo Trust.

Our story so far

Mzalendo is a Kenyan non-partisan Parliamentary monitoring organization whose mission is to "promote the realization of open, inclusive, and accountable Parliaments across Kenya and Africa". It achieves this through information collection and dissemination, developing civic tech tools, conducting evidence-based research and advocacy. The organization works via partnerships with Parliament, political parties, and civil society organizations (CSOs), as well as with relevant government entities; independent offices and constitutional commissions. Mzalendo promotes public participation in politics by providing information about the activities of the National Assembly, the Senate and county assemblies.

Mzalendo was founded in 2005 by Ory Okolloh and Conrad Akunga, as a website and blog to inform citizens about Kenya's Parliament. In response to the promulgation of the COK 2010, which put public participation at the core of Kenya's governance system, Mzalendo re-launched in 2012 as a comprehensive Parliamentary information website, the first ever in Africa, drawing upon, TheyWorkForYou, the UK Parliament's tracking website, with technical and financial support from mySociety and the Omidyar Network (now Luminate). In 2013, Mzalendo was registered as a Trust, under the name of Mzalendo Trust.

Mzalendo has since grown in scope and ambitions. It now provides detailed profiles and contact information for MPs, a searchable Hansard, vital statistics on Constituency Development Fund (CDF) spending as well as advanced online and SMS tools for public inputs into draft legislation (*Dokeza*) and public interest issues (*Bonga-na-Mzalendo).*

2021

2005

Key Milestones In Mzalendo's Journey
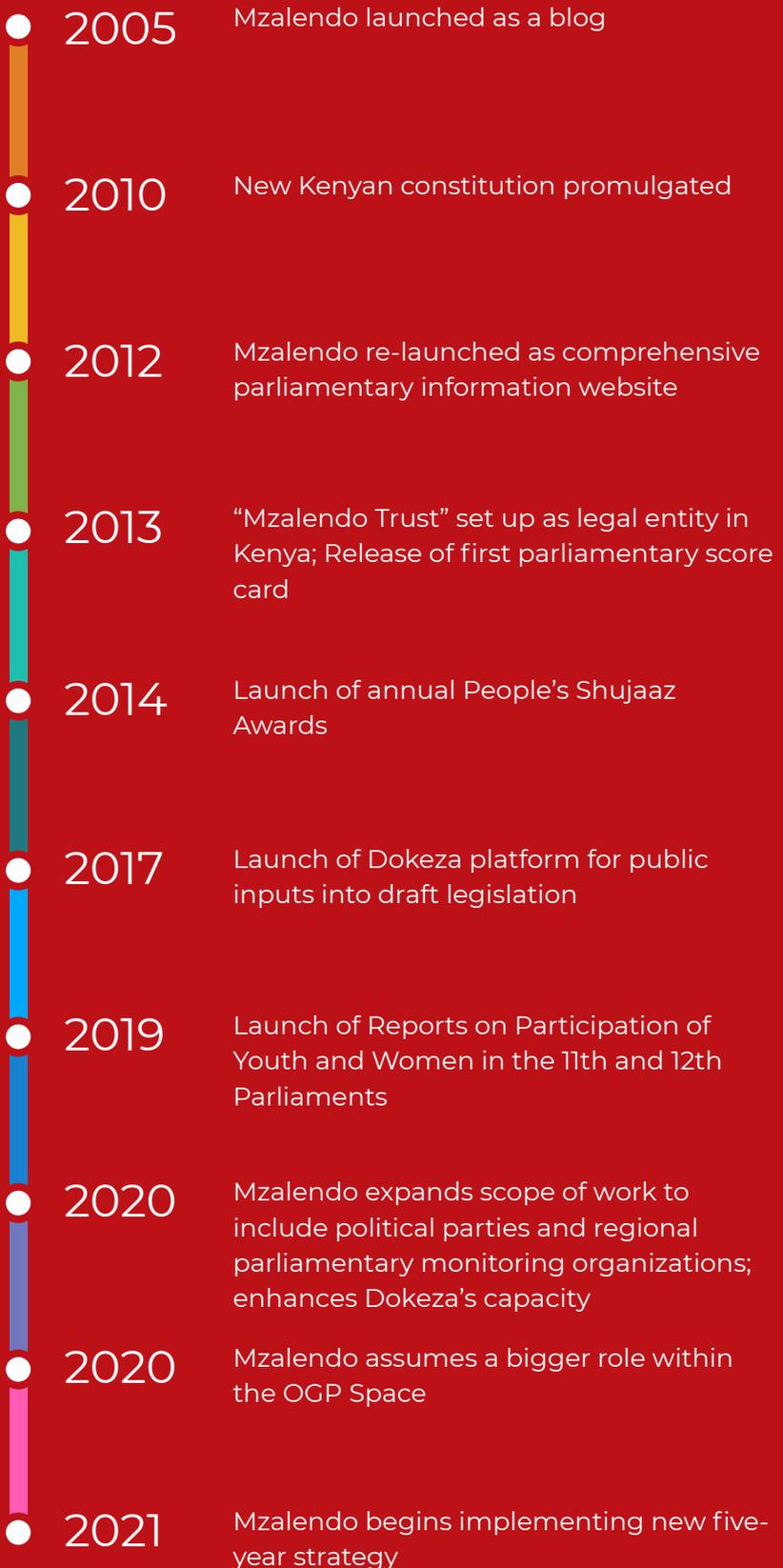
2005   Mzalendo launched as a blog

2010   New Kenyan constitution promulgated

2012   Mzalendo re-launched as comprehensive parliamentary information website

2013   "Mzalendo Trust" set up as legal entity in Kenya; Release of first parliamentary score card

2014   Launch of annual People's Shujaaz Awards

2017   Launch of Dokeza platform for public inputs into draft legislation

2019   Launch of Reports on Participation of Youth and Women in the 11th and 12th Parliaments

2020   Mzalendo expands scope of work to include political parties and regional parliamentary monitoring organizations; enhances Dokeza's capacity

2020   Mzalendo assumes a bigger role within the OGP Space

2021   Mzalendo begins implementing new five-year strategy

The Constitution at the heart of Mzalendo's patriotic mission

Mzalendo means "Patriot" in Swahili. We are driven and inspired by the COK, 2010 and the need to defend and advance the principles of public participation, openness, inclusion and accountability that are at its core. The principles are variously provided for in the COK, 2010.

OPENNESS

"Parliament shall (a) conduct its business in an open manner, and its sittings and those of its committees shall be in public; and (b) facilitate public participation and involvement in the legislative and other business of Parliament and its committees". (Art. 118 (1))

"A County Assembly shall (a) conduct its business in an open manner and hold its sittings and those of its committees in public; (b) facilitate public participation and involvement in the legislative and other business of the Assembly and its committees." (Art. 196 (1))

INCLUSION

"The electoral system shall comply with the following principles: (a) freedom of citizens to exercise their political rights under Article 38; (b) not more than two-thirds of the members of elective public bodies shall be of the same gender; (c) fair representation of persons with disabilities." (Art. 81)

"Parliament shall enact legislation to promote the representation in Parliament of (a) women;(b) persons with disabilities; (c) youth; (d) ethnic and other minorities; and (e) marginalised communities." (Art. 100)

"The State shall take legislative and other measures to implement the principle that not more than two-thirds of the members of elective or appointive bodies shall be of the same gender." (Art 27(8))

ACCOUNTABILITY

"All sovereign power belongs to the people of Kenya and shall be exercised only in accordance with this Constitution" (Art. 1(1))

"The People may exercise their sovereign power either directly or through their democratically elected representatives" (Art. 1(2))

'The national values and principles of governance include-patriotism, national unity, sharing and devolution of power, the rule of law, democracy and participation of the people' (Art. 10 (2)).

"The legislative authority of the Republic is derived from the people and, at the national level, is vested in and exercised by Parliament" (Art. 94 (1))

"Every person has a right to petition Parliament to consider any matter within its authority, including to enact, amend or repeal any legislation" (Art. 119 (1))

Our mission and identity

Our Mission

Mzalendo promotes open, inclusive, and accountable Parliaments in Kenya and Africa.

Our Vision

We want a country and region where political, civic actors and citizens actively collaborate, influence each other, and meaningfully participate in legislative and political processes. We want to see both national and local levels of government following this path, also leveraging technology where possible, so as to strengthen avenues for transparency, participation, inclusion and accountability. We believe that this will ultimately lead to more effective and responsive legislation and political processes that foster Kenya's development goals.

Our Values

Our programmatic work and operations are guided by the following values:

1. **Transparency:** We promote and practice transparency in our work as a necessary pre-condition to participation and accountability, including accountability to citizens, to our partners and, within Mzalendo, to one another.
2. **Patriotism:** Love for country and its people compels us to proactively engage our leaders and all Kenyans regardless of tribe, class and creed.
3. **Integrity:** Adherence to rule of law is in-built into our activities and is an expectation we encourage the public to embrace and expect of their leaders for greater accountability and transparency.
4. **Partnership:** Mzalendo Trust seeks partnerships with other organisations based on mutual respect and learning, shared purpose and values, and collective responsibility for outcomes.
5. **Innovation:** We are committed to leveraging technology to open up Parliamentary information and to amplify the voices of citizens and particularly those of women, youth and PwD.
6. **Inclusion:** We are committed to building an inclusive and diverse institution which dissuades discrimination on any grounds including, inter alia, gender, age, colour, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture or sex.

Our comparative advantage

Over time, Mzalendo has developed a distinct comparative advantage and positioning in Kenyan institutional landscape:

1. **We are the only organization exclusively devoted to "watching the Watchdog".** Mzalendo is known for its role in developing tools and research, such as our signature Parliamentary scorecard, to scrutinize the work of the Kenyan Parliament.

2. **Our web platforms are the go-to source of information on Parliamentary activities.** Citizens, media and researchers use Mzalendo's website and its platforms to gain insights on and influence the activity and performance of Parliament.

3. **We are respected for our rigour:** Even where political actors take issue with our critical positions or research findings, they recognize our reliance on solid evidence, as well as the rigour, integrity and impartiality that drives our approach.

4. **We have earned the respect of a diverse array of stakeholders:** Mzalendo has gained the trust and respect of Parliament, political parties, civil society and other government entities which uniquely positions us going forward to double down on efforts to build trust and collaboration between these stakeholders.

5. **We possess deep expertise in civic technology**: we maintain and constantly evolve an advanced toolkit of civic technology that enhances public participation and monitoring of Parliamentary activities.

Our Theory of Change

Mzalendo believes that Kenya will fulfil its development goals only if responsive and accountable political processes take hold (**impact**). We believe we can make a contribution to this by promoting open, inclusive and accountable Parliaments. Specifically, we seek to build Parliaments that make information on Parliamentary proceedings and legislative developments publicly accessible to citizens, online and offline. We also promote the electability and leadership of marginalized groups (women, youth and PwD) and the inclusion of their perspectives in Parliaments, legislation and political processes. We finally seek to enhance consultation by Parliaments and citizens' scrutiny and oversight to strengthen accountability of office holders, all the while protecting civic space (**outcomes**).
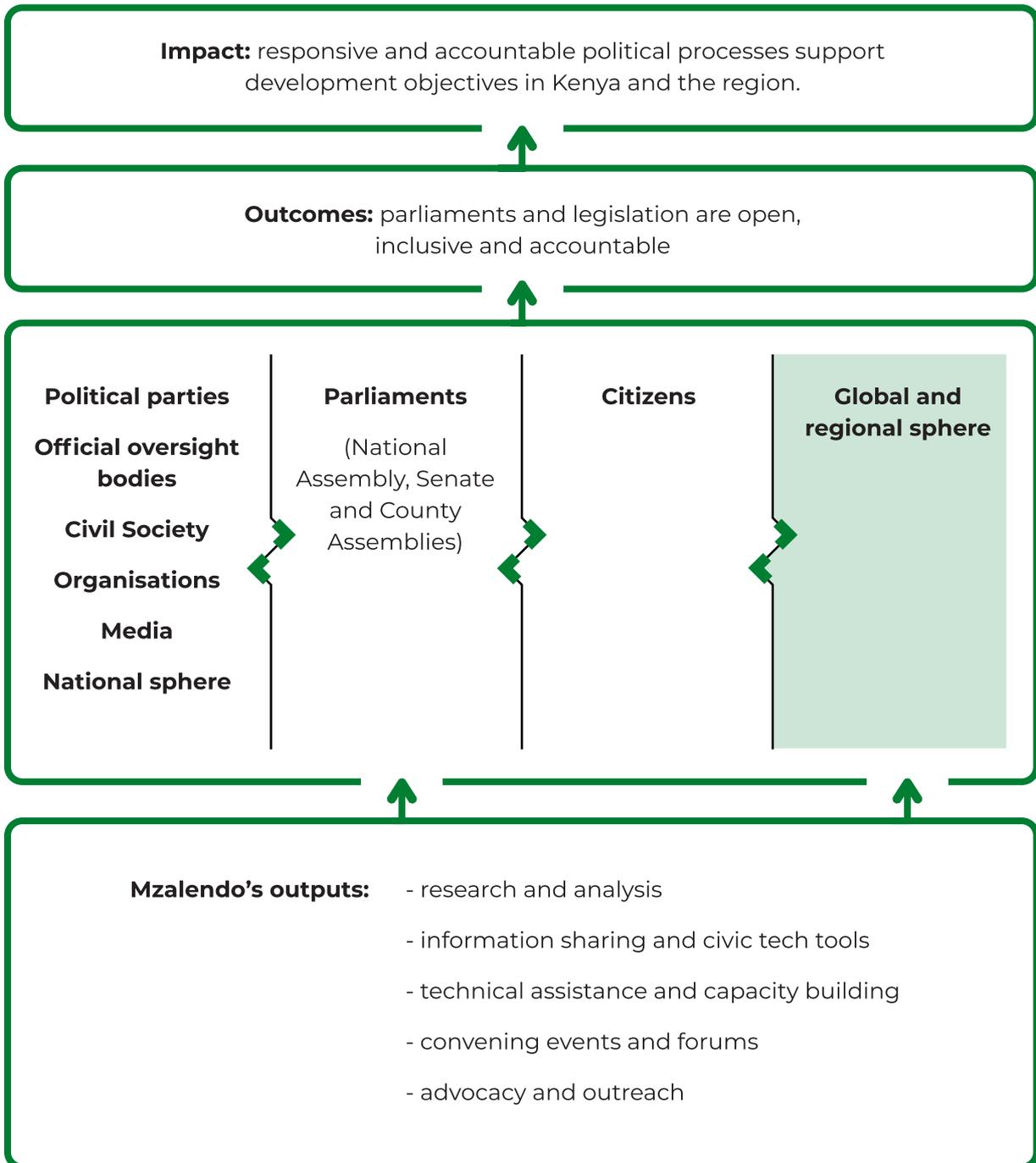
Parliament, in all its complexity and configurations (Senate and National Assembly as well as County Assemblies) is the core target of our work as it alone possesses the power to champion and realize the changes we seek. But Parliament will need incentives and support for reform. This means collaborating with, and strengthening the action of, the myriad societal forces that interface with and influence Parliament. These include **political parties, constitutional commissions and independent offices, civil society organizations** (CSOs), **media and citizens** at large. As well as Mzalendo's strategy and tactics, **regional and global partners** and initiatives can also play an important role in influencing and informing Parliament's reform agenda.

Mzalendo supports these actors with a number of **interventions** such as,

- **research and analysis**, including analysis of legislation, original research on key themes of work such as inclusion and political accountability, and Parliamentary performance monitoring reports;
- **information sharing and civic tech tools** to build public awareness and to amplify the voice of other stakeholders, with a view to increasing participation in public affairs;
- **technical assistance and capacity building** where gaps of knowledge and skills hinder stakeholder action;
- **convening events and forums** to deepen mutual trust, networks and collaboration of different stakeholders;
- **advocacy and outreach** to directly and indirectly influence the behaviour of duty holders as well as legislation.

Mzalendo's Theory of Change

Impact: responsive and accountable political processes support development objectives in Kenya and the region.

Outcomes: parliaments and legislation are open, inclusive and accountable

Political parties	Parliaments	Citizens	Global and regional sphere
Official oversight bodies	(National Assembly, Senate and County Assemblies)		
Civil Society			
Organisations			
Media			
National sphere			

Mzalendo's outputs:
- research and analysis
- information sharing and civic tech tools
- technical assistance and capacity building
- convening events and forums
- advocacy and outreach

# An enviable track-record of achievements

Since its foundation, Mzalendo has developed a number of signature initiatives and products that led to significant results. We will build on these in the coming strategic phase.

Mzalendo's website, the *Bunge* scorecard, and the People's *Shujaaz* Awards - Helping Kenyans access information to make informed choices at elections to then hold their elected representatives accountable. When Mzalendo began its activities, it was difficult for Kenyans to find information on election candidates or elected MPs. This in turn prevented citizens from making informed choices at election cycles and their active engagement with elected representatives during their term in office. Working in partnership with the Independent Electoral Boundaries Commission (IEBC), Mzalendo first addressed this gap by providing a list of election aspirants in the 2013 general elections. At the time, the IEBC website repeatedly went offline due to high demand, making Mzalendo the only stable source of information on election candidates.

After the elections Mzalendo, working with Parliament and MPs, uploaded MPs' biographic data and contact details on its website and gradually linked MPs' profiles to a searchable online Hansard. In the same year, Mzalendo started issuing its *Bunge* (Parliament) scorecard, which ranks MPs by the number of questions asked to ministries and assesses transparency of proceedings across Parliamentary committees. The analysis disaggregates results by gender, special interest groups,

age, House of Parliament in which they sit, and party affiliation. In 2014, Mzalendo complemented its scorecard with the launch of the People's Shujaaz Awards, which honour MPs who champion public interest issues on the floors of the National Assembly and Senate.

By de facto "naming and faming" the top performers in Parliament, while "shaming" "silent" MPs, these initiatives provide Kenyans with an outlook on how their MPs are faring, which in turn leads to more informed voters and increased accountability for representatives all throughout. After several iterations, MPs have become sensitive to their profiles and the public information available from Mzalendo, and increasingly reach out to us to ensure that their information is accurate and up to date. Political parties have also begun using these tools for internal accountability: at the March 2020 People's Dialogue Festival, a senior official of a major political party indicated that the party uses the *Bunge* scorecard and the information on Mzalendo's website to assess the performance of MPs affiliated to the party.
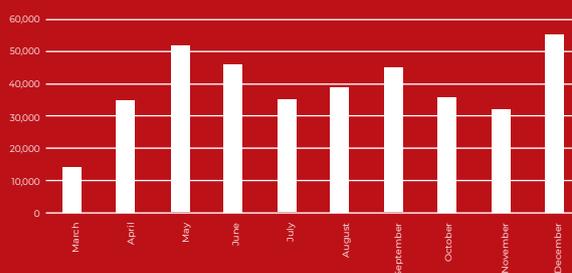

March to December 2020, a total of 349,190 users, 477,404 sessions and 908,211 page views.

The Red Card Campaign: Upholding the integrity of candidates at the 2017 national elections: Ahead of the 2017 general elections, Mzalendo, under the auspices of the civil society-led National Integrity Alliance (NIA), contributed to the Red Card Campaign. The campaign sought to inform voters on the danger of returning to office individuals who had been named by statutory agencies or prosecuted for economic crimes, abuse of office, or corruption. Mzalendo and its civil society partners conducted research into the Auditor General's reports on integrity breaches by aspirant public office holders and ultimately identified 20 candidates, the so called #RedCard20, who had been accused of grand corruption. Information was shared with the public through a sustained media campaign. The National Integrity Alliance also engaged with leaders of political parties and faith-based groups to successfully raise the issue of integrity as a key election issue. Partly as a result of Mzalendo's work together with partners under the NIA, the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission published in June 2017 a list of 106 aspirants who would not be cleared to run for public office. This included the #RedCard20. The Red Card Campaign won two continental awards as well as the Public Relations Society of Kenya Best Public Affairs Campaign of the Year. It has since inspired other efforts to hold aspirants to local office accountable for their integrity record.

Championing the creation of Kenya's Civil Society Parliamentary Engagement Network (CSPEN). With support from, and in partnership with the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD), Mzalendo was instrumental in raising the idea of re-establishing a new network of Kenyan CSOs with interest in Parliament, with a view to facilitating engagement, cross learning, peer sharing and providing a linkage between civil society and Parliament. Mzalendo organized and facilitated the inaugural meeting of CSPEN in July 2019 and it eventually assumed the role of convener and secretariat of the network, which now includes 35 member organizations. It also leads its thematic work on civic engagement. CSPEN has since met with MPs and jointly worked for the passage of key Bills, such as the Whistleblower Protection Bill, or to inform civil society's common positioning on the Building Bridges Initiative.

A voice for the marginalized: working for the inclusion of women and youth in Parliament and through legislative processes. Mzalendo has pioneered research and analysis on the role and representation of women, youth and young women in politics and Parliament. These led to concrete recommendations that were discussed in multi-stakeholder meetings with government, Parliament and other stakeholders, and widely covered by national media. Mzalendo has also championed the 2016 National Youth Employment Authority Bill, working with the proponent of the legislation, the Kenya Young Parliamentarians Association, and other youth associations to help frame the content of the Bill, mobilize public inputs into the Bill through Mzalendo's Facebook page and *Dokeza* platform, and submit a review of the Bill to Parliament. The Bill was finally approved in April 2016. This was the first time that Mzalendo went beyond amplifying civil society voices to take direct action in shaping the content of legislation, with attention to consensus-building and incorporating public perspectives. In the subsequent years, Mzalendo has continued to actively play a role in shaping the content of other draft Bills.
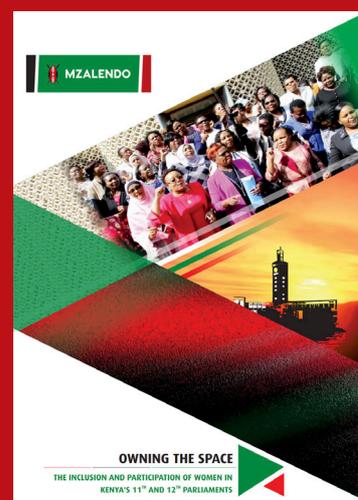
Championing Legislative Transparency in Kenya's Open Government Partnership (OGP). Mzalendo was the leading organization in Kenyan civil society to champion and secure the inclusion of "legislative transparency" as a key reform commitment in the second (2016-2018) OGP NAP. This was in recognition of the incentives for reform that the OGP provides, by anchoring reform processes to multi-stakeholder dialogue and leveraging the OGP's independent review mechanism to hold parties accountable to reform commitments. Mzalendo was recognized by the OGP as a "supporting institution" in the area of legislative transparency, and at the end of NAP II its work was widely credited in OGP's independent review. Indeed, Mzalendo's operations were credited as central to Kenya's "substantial" progress towards achieving its commitment to provide citizens with more opportunities to review draft legislation and to provide input on public policy, via its *Dokeza* platform. Kenya's commitment to legislative transparency was maintained in its third (2018-2020) National Action Plan (NAP), under a broader commitment to improve "public participation in development decision making for better and responsive service delivery", with Mzalendo mentioned again as a key supporting organization. Under this com-

mitment, Mzalendo, working with Parliament, played a crucial role in demanding and supporting the successful passage of the Public Participation Bill, 2019 in the Senate. The Bill was significant as it mandates increased use of social media, improved web content and livestreaming on YouTube of Parliamentary and committees' proceedings. In acknowledgement of Mzalendo's hitherto successful role within the OGP ecosystem, including being the Co-Convener alongside the Senate, of the Public Participation Commitment under NAP III, the organization has assumed the responsibility of co-convening and facilitating the co-creation and implementation of NAP IV (2021-2022). We ensured that NAP IV retained "Public Participation and Legislative Openness" commitment.

The establishment of *Dokeza* and *Bonga-na-Mzalendo* to facilitate and increase public participation in legislative processes. Since playing a decisive role in the successful passage of the 2016 National Youth Employment Authority Act, Mzalendo continued to receive regular requests from CSOs to help improve public consultation around other draft Bills. By law, Parliament is required to advertise "calls for memoranda" (i.e. requests for public comments) in leading newspapers and give Kenyans up to six days to submit

their views through written memoranda to Parliament. However, the reality was that only around 500,000 Kenyans (roughly 2% of the population) would regularly buy these papers, and as a result few commented on draft legislation.

These considerations set the stage for the launch of *Dokeza* ("Share Your Idea", in Swahili) in April 2017, an online platform that allows anyone to access Bills before the Senate and the National Assembly. The platform, the design and development of which was supported by both Houses of Parliament, tracks draft legislation as well as amendments and justifications for said amendments. It indicates when Bills are open for memoranda, allows registered users to post comments, and provides explanatory notes on Bills where necessary.

As an outgrowth to Dokeza, Mzalendo launched *Bonga-na-Mzalendo,* an SMS interface which allows users to use text messages to ask questions on legislative reforms or public interest issues. These messages are then relayed to relevant institutions and further amplified using Mzalendo's social media. With this new tool, Mzalendo was able to provide tools for public participation to the myriad Kenyans that do not yet possess a smart phone. To further these efforts, Mzalendo held "participation forums" between June and December 2018 to familiarize around 1,000 students with Dokeza and actively engage them in providing inputs for 6 pieces of legislation.

When the Covid-19 pandemic struck in 2020, Dokeza became a vital tool for remote public participation and was used to annotate and manage public inputs into a variety of Bills including the Tax Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2020, and the Pandemic Response and Management Bill, 2020. The platform has since been enhanced to simplify the memorandum generation process as well as to include a Legislative Tracking tool.
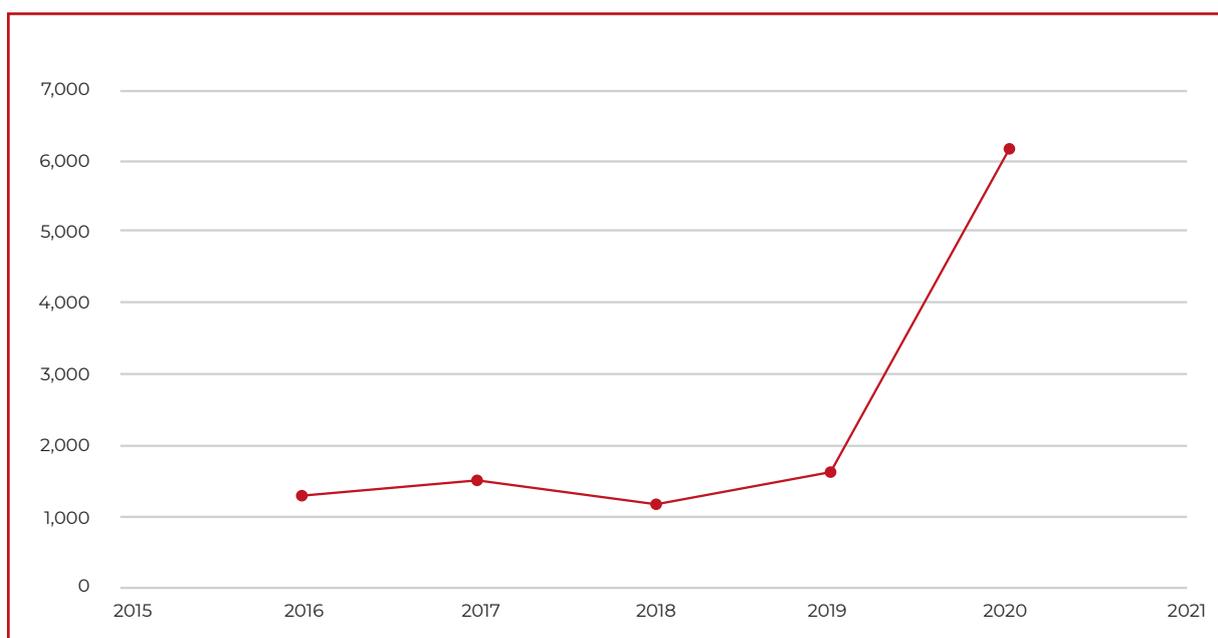
Number of new followers of Mzalendo's Twitter account highlighted from 2016 to 2020.

The Need to Adapt to a Changing Context

Kenya and the world have undergone seismic shifts, and Mzalendo has incrementally adapted its work to address the associated risks and opportunities. As Mzalendo embarks on a new strategy, a number of factors will shape our ambitions and priorities:

1

Actualizing the COK, 2010 remains an imperative guiding our work

Over the last decade, Kenya has witnessed monumental developments that have shaped the country's political, economic and social ecosystems. The ratification of a new Constitution in 2010 ushered in a presidential system of governance, with a more marked separation of powers, greater judicial independence, and a strong focus on transparency, participation and accountability. It also introduced a devolved system of governance, comprised of national and county governments. At the national level, a bicameral Parliament consisting of the National Assembly and the Senate is entrusted with legislative authority. At the local level, county assemblies are tasked with oversight of county governments.

Progress has been made to actualize and institutionalize the public participation provisions of the Constitution, notably with the successful passage of the Public Participation Bill by the Senate in May 2019. However, a similar Bill before the National Assembly still awaits passage, as do guidelines to operationalize the provisions of approved legislation. Also, meaningful participation at the county level is inconsistent and has largely remained tokenistic. This is despite the existence of a legal framework for participation at the devolved level, and the national government's County Public Participation Guidelines. It therefore remains of paramount importance for Mzalendo to continue deploying advocacy and civic tech tools to build on progress made and double down on efforts to advance citizen participation in county level politics.

COK, 2010 contains robust provisions on gender inclusion in both the elective and appointive positions across all public governance spaces. Nevertheless, women remain under-represented in Kenya's politics and institutions. For instance, women comprise just under 21% of the twelfth (sitting) Parliament, short of the 33% target required by Kenya's two-thirds gender rule. Youth representation is equally low, despite youth constituting approximately three-quarters of the country's population according to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS). Given its centrality, Mzalendo intends to sustain its engagement into the discourse via all available platforms, networks and initiatives.

2

The Building Bridges to Unity Initiative (BBI) and resulting Constitutional Amendment Bill promise yet more shifts in Kenya's system of governance; Mzalendo must remain a vigilant and vocal voice in this process

Following the 2018 "Handshake" between President Uhuru Kenyatta and former Prime Minister Raila Odinga, the BBI was introduced to heal the country's divisions and, through a consultative process, resolve the root causes that lead to recurrent civil and political strife. A special taskforce, appointed under the BBI, issued a comprehensive report that has in turn led to the introduction in November 2020 of the Constitution of Kenya (Amendment) Bill, 2020. The Bill will likely be put to a referendum in 2021. The Bill seeks to reintroduce a semi-presidential system, with the creation of a Prime Minister with two deputies, along with a leader of official opposition and shadow cabinet. This could help better share power and strengthen oversight of the Executive, which presents opportunities for Mzalendo. However, questions remain on the presidential concentration of power thanks to the amendment, in that the office would become responsible for appointing the Prime Minster and deputies. Also, the de facto power sharing and governing coalition arrangements post-Handshake have arguably emasculated opposition in Parliament, calling on civil society to play a more vigorous independent oversight role than before.

The Bill also contains new provisions on inclusion to ensure effective women's representation in Parliament. It also provides for the retention of

representation of youth and PwD at the National Assembly, but not specifically in the Senate. While these changes are supportive of Mzalendo's agenda on inclusion, questions remain on how they would be operationalized in practice. There are   risks, including that the provisions could discourage representation of women in party lists and lead to a bloated Parliament. This is because a top-up system could lead to the appointment of additional seats to neutralize gender imbalances produced by election results.

On the accountability front, the Bill proposes to strengthen National Assembly members' say over which projects within their constituencies would get support from a reformed Constituency Development Fund (CDF). This creates avenues to strengthen accountability on the use of these funds, but also risks of political interference and conflicts of interest in project identification and spending decisions.

These and other changes proposed under the Bill call on Mzalendo's continued involvement in the process through ongoing analysis and coordinated advocacy via CSPEN. The analysis and advocacy will also directly benefit from the use of Mzalendo's civic tech tool Dokeza to ensure the public has a say on the Bill and other planned legislative changes.

3

The Covid-19 pandemic has amplified worsening civic space trends in Kenya but also created new forms and avenues for public participation that Mzalendo intends to leverage going forward

A recent study by Mzalendo on the impact of Covid-19 on governance shows that the pandemic provided the Executive with an opportunity to exert its authority over the Legislature and political parties, weakening divergent voices, and purging Parliamentary leadership of those seen to be critical. Whereas at the start, the response to the crisis was deemed as health-driven, concerns gradually emerged that the pandemic was being used to undermine independent constitutional offices and the Constitution in general.

An already-eroding civic space was faced with legislative operationalization delays (i.e. regarding the Public Benefit Organizations Act, a law that regulates CSOs), wrangling over government budgetary allocation to county governments and independent constitutional offices, rising intimidation and harassment, and government hostility to civic actors working on democracy, governance, and human rights. By exploiting the room for engagement with government that still remains, Mzalendo will continue being an active voice in contrasting and

reversing this concerning backsliding of democratic norms.

This said, the Covid-19 crisis has also accelerated the rise of innovative forms of online activism, triggered the adoption of virtual sittings in Parliament and Parliamentary committees, and encouraged new forms of online public consultation. These all provide critical entry points for Mzalendo to further its digital engagement agenda during and beyond the pandemic.
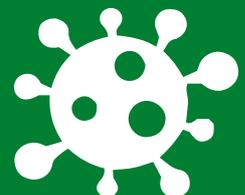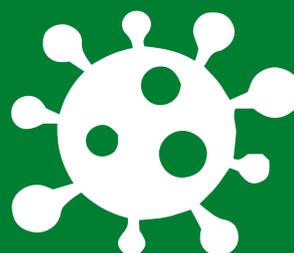
4 Despite encouraging progress, corruption remains rampant and undermines citizens' trust in public institutions

Building on progress made, Mzalendo intends to be more intentional in its fight for integrity in public office. Kenya possesses a robust legal and institutional framework to fight corruption, with bribery and abuse of office criminalized under the Anti-Corruption and Economic Crimes Act 2003 and the Bribery Act of 2016. Yet enforcement of existing rules has traditionally been weak. High levels of corruption at both the national and county government levels have diluted public confidence in politics and civil service. Recent exposés of Covid-19 related theft, including allegations of public protective equipment tenders being given to politically connected businesses and individuals, add to a long list of scandals which have outraged the nation. However, we see positive signals towards change, such as recent efforts by the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (EACC), the Directorate of Criminal Investigations (DCI) and the Office of Directorate of Public Prosecution (ODPP) to arrest and sometimes seize assets of those accused of corruption. Mzalendo sees corruption as a plague that stunts Kenya's development potential and intends to double down on its resolve to elevate the issue of integrity in public discourse.

5

Increasing internet penetration and use of social media by the Kenyan public and politicians create ongoing opportunities for Mzalendo to deploy and strengthen its civic technology. Yet we must also cater to the needs of those that have been left out by the digital revolution through a concerted traditional media and offline engagement strategy

According to the Communication Authority of Kenya (CA), up to 90% of the Kenyan population has access to mobile telephones and the attendant internet connectivity. Out of these, more than three-quarters have smartphones that can readily access the internet. As the uptake of technology by citizens and government institutions increases, it has been heartening to see Parliament, both collectively and singularly, adopt the use of social media and live coverage as tools of communication with citizens.

An increasing share of Kenyan public, particularly young people, are politically conscious and actively engage in public affairs. These trends suggest that Mzalendo's use of online platforms and social media for public engagement will remain critical in the years to come. As we continue with our efforts to aggregate and share data, we will be mindful of the need to protect the personal information of individuals, including MPs and users of

our platforms, as required by the Data Protection Act, 2019.

Yet, most Kenyans continue to receive their news from traditional media, be that TV, radio or print publications. Many, particularly those in rural areas, have traditional feature mobile phones that do not connect to the internet. This calls on Mzalendo to develop strategies to more proactively engage traditional media as key information intermediaries, while pursuing efforts to enable the broader public to engage, including through the Bonga-na-Mzalendo SMS interface.

6 The Open Government Partnership (OGP) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will remain important anchors for Mzalendo's work

Mzalendo will continue to promote the objectives of inclusion, transparency, accountability enshrined in OGP, SDG 5 and SDG 16. Specifically, we will continue to play the role of convener of target 7 ("Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels") under SDG 16 in Kenya ("Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels"). We shall also leverage on our membership of the Transparency, Accountability and Participation (TAP) Network to further the realization of inclusive and participatory governance in Kenya.

The OGP has proved a fruitful entry point to elicit and, to some degree, achieve more legislative openness, access to information and public participation, as evidenced by the progress made under the second and third national action plans. While the possible constitutional referendum in 2021 and planned elections in 2022 may absorb public and political energy at the start of our new strategy and delay OGP progress, we believe that the OGP remains an important anchor and framework in the medium term to pursue our strategic ambitions. Mzalendo will

continue to play its role as an OGP convening and supporting institution, which includes drawing attention to gaps in implementation outlined by successive OGP independent review mechanism reports. This includes the need to institutionalize Dokeza and other proposed tools, as legislative tracking and annotation tools and the need to mainstream openness and participation in the work of county assemblies.

7

Kenya's 2022 general elections create important opportunities and risks for the country and our work

On the one hand, we must remain vigilant to help diffuse political and civic tensions and prevent attacks on civic space that could materialize during the election campaign. On the other hand, elections create a fertile ground for engaging with political parties and candidates on our agenda and to strengthen the integrity and accountability of Kenyan electoral politics and processes.

Dreaming big: Our strategic ambitions for the next 5 years

Building on our achievements (and being mindful of the changing context and our comparative advantage as a PMO), Mzalendo's 2021-2025 strategy effects and codifies a number of important **shifts** in our work:

1

Increasing the quality and breadth of online and offline tools for public participation in Parliamentary affairs

Among others, this will include: building and curating archival information on our platforms; achieving higher open data standards and improved searchability of existing online tools; meeting new legislative data protection requirements; deployment of new online tools, including for county assemblies; and deployment of offline tools and a proactive media outreach strategy to facilitate the involvement of all segments of the Kenyan public, including those still left out by the digital revolution.

2

Playing a stronger role in coordinating and leading civil society advocacy on legislative developments

Mzalendo will continue to play its core function of aggregating and disseminating Parliamentary information and continue to facilitate and amplify public inputs in draft legislation and public debates via *Dokeza* and *Bonga-na-Mzalendo*. Building on our achievements such as those on the National Youth Employment and Public Participation Bills, we intend to become more vocal in influencing the content of draft legislation. We will do this by working in partnership with other civic groups, within the framework of CSPEN, as well as political actors with an interest and expertise in subject matters at hand, and by actively reaching out to media to build public awareness and pressure. Mzalendo's legislative analysis and direct advocacy will be primarily oriented to issues that align with our areas of expertise (e.g., transparency, inclusion, accountability, civic space and the digital agenda among others). Yet, we will selectively and responsively engage in other thematic areas of work where this affords us critical opportunities for learning and impact, pave the way to new partnerships and inroads into important political circles and, where our direct involvement increases the likelihood of success.

3

Expanding our inclusion agenda so that no one in Kenya is left behind

Since delivering its first research on the women in politics in 2015, Mzalendo has incrementally expanded its work on inclusion of women and youth in 2019 and, in 2020, it has developed an incipient focus on PwD, which we will expand on going forward. We will also be more attentive to the needs of the marginalized in Kenya, with greater focus on amplifying the voice of remote marginalized rural communities.

4

Being more deliberate in our fight against corruption

With the Redcard campaign, Mzalendo demonstrated it can be a powerful voice in championing integrity in Parliament and public bodies. Going forward, we will be more intentional in defending the anti-corruption provisions of Chapter 6 of the Kenyan Constitution, including by shedding light and taking a stance on conflicts of interest that distort accountability and erode citizens' trust in public institutions.

5

Deeper engagement of political parties to promote inclusion, and to enhance public accountability on election promises

Building on our 2020 flagship report "From Promise to Implementation", Mzalendo will continue to regularly review how electoral commitments of key Kenyan political parties have translated into their legislative agenda, with focus on areas that are core to our strategy (e.g., inclusion, good governance and devolution). With an eye to inclusion, we will engage political parties to increase the diversity and gender balance of party lists and to promote legislation that addresses the needs and perspectives of marginalized groups.

6

Vertical integration of action at the regional, national and county levels

Kenya's system of devolved governance and increasing integration in supranational bodies calls on Mzalendo to build on progress made with Parliament at the national level. We will do this by advancing, selectively, openness and public participation in the work of county assemblies as well as increasing its outreach efforts to the legislative bodies of the Africa Union and East Africa Community that increasingly shape policy and public life in Kenya.

These shifts in turn inform our choice of strategic **themes** of work, **audiences** and **geography** of action.

What we do: openness, inclusion and accountability as our three strategic themes

1 **Promoting and Monitoring Legislative Openness**

Scope of work: We will champion access to Parliamentary information and use technology to make Parliament more accessible. Using our web platform, we shall put in place mechanisms to increase engagement between representatives and their constituents. This will include cascading legislative transparency and oversight to county level by rolling out the legislative trackers in selected counties.

Flagship initiatives:
- **Publication and dissemination of Parliamentary information** on Mzalendo's website, including: Parliamentary and committee proceedings; a searchable Hansard; biodata, Parliamentary contributions, motions, Bills, statements and petitions by every elected representative; and CDF allocations and spending.

- **Tools for tracking, influencing and monitoring of legislative initiatives**, including an enhanced vote tracker of key legislative developments and committee activities; online surveys and polls of public priorities and perspectives on topical themes and constitutional discussions; and CDF spending tracking tools.

- **Research and analysis on open Parliaments and relevant legislative themes.**

- **Technical assistance** to Parliamentary committees, caucuses and secretariats to increase openness and accessibility of information, including through the design, implementation and monitoring of **open Parliaments action plans** at national and county levels, within the purview of the OGP, where opportune.

- **Convening elected representatives and citizens** for dialogue and action on key legislative themes, including through a monthly dialogue series, open days and "know your MP" sessions, using a mix of virtual and physical platforms.

- **Social media amplification** of public hearings or key debates in Parliament.

- **Sharing learning and experiences with Parliamentary monitoring organizations** in the region.

2

Promoting Inclusive Parliaments and Political Processes

Scope of work: we intend to champion the inclusion of marginalized people in Parliamentary and political processes. We shall work with Parliamentary caucuses, political parties, media, women, and youth-led or -focused civil society organizations to promote and monitor the progress of inclusive legislation, develop evidence-based research to inform decision making processes, and provide action-oriented dialogue opportunities between citizens and political actors.

Flagship initiatives:

- **Capacity building for marginalized group representatives and associations,** including skills and knowledge training for youth and women representatives and their associations; convening and facilitation of action-setting meetings between, and with, marginalized groups Parliamentary associations; and mentorship and peer learning exchanges between elected youth and women representatives in Kenya and the rest of the region.

- **Research and analysis on women, youth and PwD in politics** to advance the participation and inclusion of marginalized groups and to inform legislative developments and advocacy.

- **Leading and coordinating advocacy and media engagement** on legislative developments with a bearing on inclusion of marginalized groups and communities, in partnership with leading women, youth and PWDs Parliamentary associations and civic groups.

- **Building a broad pro-inclusion movement,** deepening networks and collaborative work with youth, women and PWDs leaders in civil society or with civic groups with a pro-inclusion agenda; and between these groups and relevant Parliamentary representatives, associations and caucuses. This will include collaboration with actors involved in the advancement of SDG 16 goals in Kenya.

- **Deploy tactics to showcase the work and experiences of trailblazing women, youth and PwD representatives** (e.g., Mzalendo Chats)

3 Promoting Civic Engagement, Scrutiny and Accountability of Parliament

Scope of work: We will champion public partic-ipation, citizen oversight over Parliaments, and more consultative and responsive political processes by developing tools for participation and consultation, coordinating civil society engagement with Parliament under the umbrella of the CSPEN, and leading research and analysis on the performance of Parlia-ments at national and county levels as well as on civic space issues.

Flagship initiatives:

- **Annual scorecards** to monitor the performance of Parliament, individ-ual MPs, committees and political parties in terms of Parliamentary activities, transparency of proceed-ings and quality of work; we will also selectively deploy scorecards to county assemblies and representa-tives.

- **Online and offline tools to ag-gregate and amplify public com-ments on legislative initiatives and debates**, such as *Dokeza, Bon-ga-na-Mzalendo,* Mzalendo Chats and Mzalendo's social media and newsletter.

- Research and engagement with political parties on how **electoral manifesto commitments** translate into legislative initiatives.

- Improving the **accountability of CDF and NGAAF spending**, by leading or facilitating social audits, in partnership with CSOs and citi-zens, and by increasing the quality of media oversight of Auditor Gen-eral reports on use of CDF & NGAAF Funds.

- Leading or supporting **research, advocacy and media engagement** to review and respond to legislative initiatives with an impact **on civic space**, **integrity and public inter-est** issues more broadly, generally playing a role of aggregator of public inputs and where relevant, directly influencing legislation.

- **Honour and showcase MPs who champion public interest issues** via the *People's Shujaaz Awards* and other interventions.

- **Convening of multi-stakeholder forums** to increase political aware-ness, dialogue and collaboration between citizens, civil society and Parliament on Bills of national interest: Open space for public-Par-liament dialogue accountability issues more generally.

Whom we work with: our audiences and partners

Mzalendo will focus its efforts on the following stakeholders that hold the power to effect change:

Parliaments in Kenya remain the core target of our work. We recognize that national and subnational Parliaments (county assemblies) are complex institutions, made up of individual members, committees, secretariats and staff, as well as independent or specialized technical offices and departments (e.g., Centre for Parliamentary Studies and Training), each playing unique roles in fulfilling the oversight, legislative and representation roles of Parliaments. We will continue to consider the totality of Parliament in our work and collaborate with reformers and champions to increase transparency of information as well as consultation of, and accountability to, citizens. In the sphere of inclusion, we will deepen our partnerships with leading Parliamentary caucuses, such as the Kenya Young Parliamentar-

ians Association (KYPA), Kenya Women Parliamentary Association (KEWOPA), Kenya Disability Parliamentary Association (KEDIPA) and the African Parliamentary Network Against Corruption (APNAC).

Political parties play an important role in setting the legislative agenda and craft electoral manifestos that inform voter choices on their policy stances, for which they are then accountable to the public if elected. They also play a key role in shaping party lists, directly affecting how well marginalized groups are represented in public office. Mzalendo will work with political parties to review how they have upheld electoral commitments and ensure they mainstream transparency, inclusion and accountability in their internal practices and legislative agenda. When
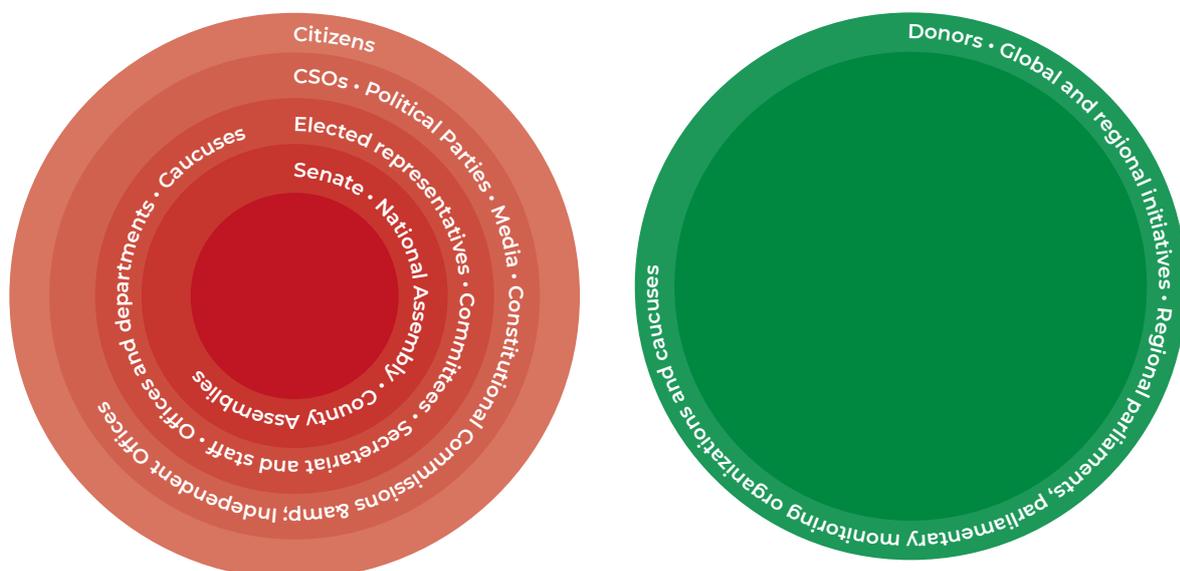

Mzalendo's ecosystem.

working with political parties, Mzalendo's key targets will include:

- Party secretariats;
- The Office of the Registrar of Political Parties (ORPP), the body that regulates, monitors, investigates and supervises political parties;
- The Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC), which is responsible for conducting, regulating or supervising referenda and elections and carrying out voter education; and
- The Political Parties Liaison Com-

mittee (PPLC), which provides a link between the ORPP and IEBC.

Constitutional Commissions and Independent Offices play an essential oversight role on public bodies and office holders in Kenya's institutional ecosystem. Mzalendo's main targets include the Office of the Auditor-General, which reports on integrity breaches by aspirant public office holders and on the use and spending of the CDF, two key areas of our work. The Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission is also a critical actor who gathers information on corruption, and working
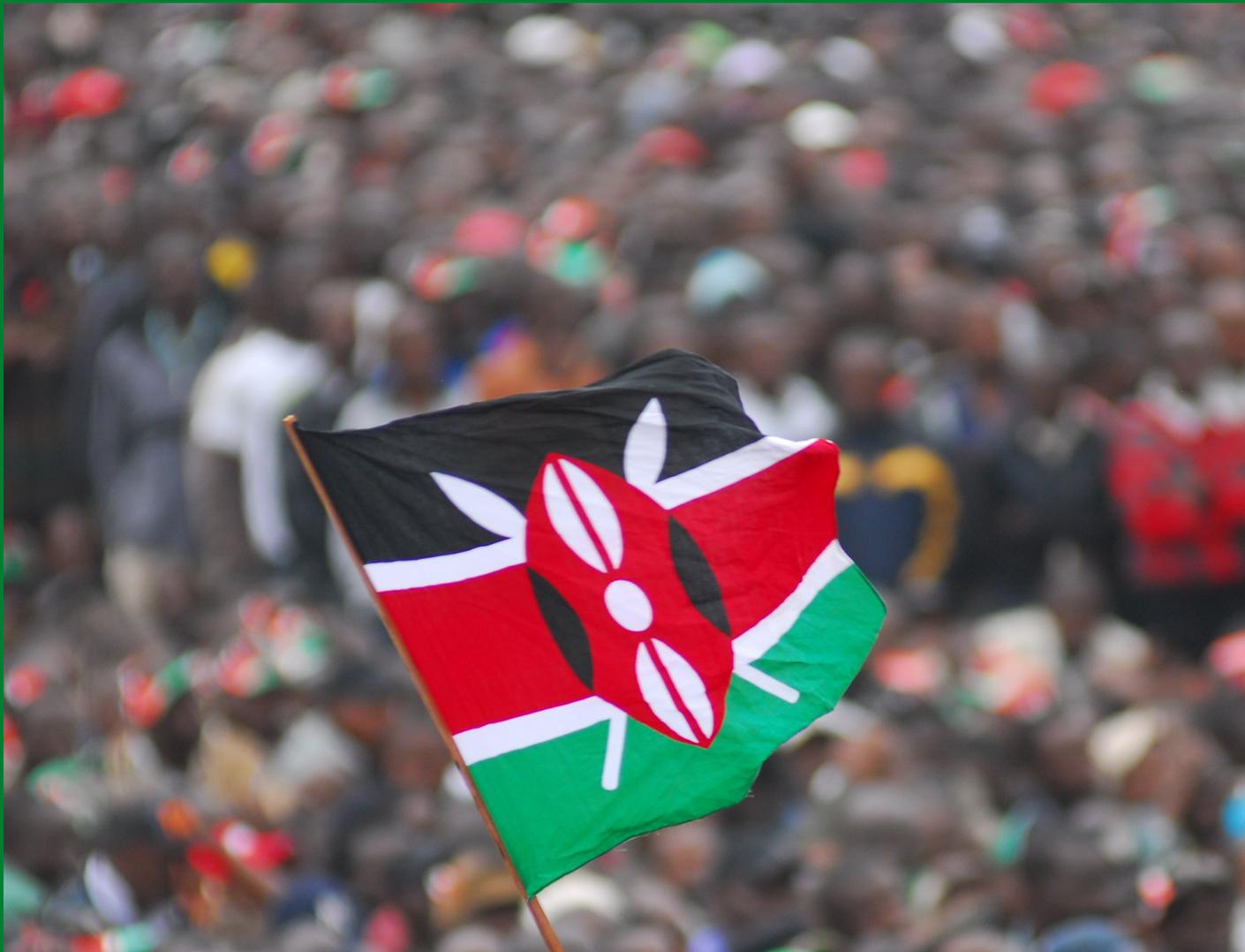
with judicial authorities, secures convictions, informs financial investigations and recovers assets acquired from corruption as a deterrence strategy. We also look forward to widening and deepening engagement with other offices such as the Commission on Administrative Justice (CAJ), National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC), among others, on issues related to our mandate.

CSOs play an important independent role of technical analysis and advocacy vis-a-vis Parliament, political parties and the Executive on their specialty areas of focus. They also help aggregate and represent the views of their constituencies. Mzalendo collaborates with CSOs that influence public policy in our core areas of work, such as openness, inclusion, accountability, civic tech and integrity. We also avail CSOs operating on other themes of work with tools to amplify their voice and advocacy on legislative issues. We will build on existing partnerships with key CSOs, such as the National Integrity Alliance, the Constitution and Reform Education Consortium (CRECO), the Elections Observation Group (ELOG), the National Taxpayers Association (NTA) among others, while forging new partnerships with actors operating at the county level. We will continue to convene and facilitate the work of the CSPEN as the key platform for outreach and coordination of Kenyan CSOs on Parliamentary affairs.

The media plays an important role of intermediary and interpreter of information, creating an important link between public institutions and citizens. Building on existing local and international networks and visibility in media circles, Mzalendo will proactively engage print media, TVs, and radio stations at the international, regional, national, and local levels, to bring to them our analyses and tools to inform their coverage of key issues. This will also help us reach those Kenyans that primarily get their news from offline sources of information.

Citizens are the ultimate beneficiaries of our work but are also a critical player in their own right. When citizens are aware of their civic duties and rights, and can access relevant information and tools, they can virtuously engage with their elected representatives and political parties to influence legislation and elicit accountability. Civic technology and social media have provided an increasingly conscious public with new avenues and opportunities to make their voice heard. As a civic tech organization, Mzalendo is ideally positioned to provide citizens with tools and information to play their civic and political roles with increasing effectiveness and resolve.

Global and regional partners have the ability to support and amplify our agenda in their respective areas of expertise. Our partners include the secretariats of key initiatives in which we play a role, such as the OGP and SDGs. They include regional Parliaments, PMOs, and transnational Parliamentary caucuses such as the African Parliamentarians' Network Against Corruption (APNAC). We also partner with African organizations that promote inclusion in politics, such as *Akina Mama wa Afrika* (AMwA) (Swahili for "African women"). Donors are also core partners for Mzalendo. Ever since our foundation as a website leveraging mySociety's proprietary technology, we have considered donors as critical partners that provide us with more than solely funding; they also bring valuable strategic, technical, and where possible, advocacy support.

Where we work: our geography of action

Mzalendo's work to date has been pre-dominantly at the **national level.** We expect the bulk of our future work to focus on national public interest issues given the outsized impact that national level politics play on governance and development outcomes in Kenya.

Yet Mzalendo needs to play a stronger role at the **county level,** in order to make the most of the devolution of power effected by the Constitution and related reforms currently underway. Devolution came with the promise of greater proximity of government to citizens. Yet a decade later, this is yet to translate into greater transparency or increased participation in local politics. Worse, decentralization of powers has brought along a decentralization of patronage politics, creating new pockets of corruption that are widening the wedge between citizens and local representatives. As we begin to venture into county level work, we recognize that we do not have, nor want to develop, the capacity and scale to work on all 47 counties of Kenya. **We will therefore need to be strategic and selective.** This means among others:

- **Focusing on reform mind-ed-counties to lead the way.** This involves incrementally piloting work with no more than 5 counties that have the potential to lead the way and develop new models of transparency and participation that could be picked up and replicated by other counties in Kenya. Priority support will go to those counties that have signed up to

reform commitments under the OGP.

- **Working in partnership with local actors.** Mzalendo will build partnerships with local CSOs and citizens that are well versed in local politics and bring relevant expertise and networks to aptly navigate county level reform processes. Partnering with local actors will also help transfer capacity and increase local uptake of our tools to ensure their sustainability.

- **Staying true to our comparative advantage.** While we recognize the need to adapt our work to local level specificities, we intend to build on our accumulated expertise and leverage our existing disclosure technology, tracking tools and scorecards to strengthen openness, inclusion and accountability at this level of government.

The increasing political and economic integration of Kenya in the Africa region and East Africa sub-region also calls for more intentionality in our work at the **regional level.** We have built initial contacts with pan-African Parliaments representatives and will consider how to selectively bring our agenda and toolkit to this level of governance. In addition and informed by the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG) and Agenda 2063, we will continue our engagement with peer PMOs from other African countries to share our learning and approaches and in turn learn from their work. We expect that this ongoing dialogue will eventually lead to collaborative transnational work, including (but not limited to) regional initiatives targeting multiple national and regional Parliaments.

Building a resilient organization

Building a robust and strong Mzalendo is critical for the realization of our thematic objectives and to reinforce our position as a thought leader in Parliamentary affairs and monitoring. Over the next five years we will focus on the following aspects, which are essential to the overall growth, consolidation and sustainability of Mzalendo Trust:

- **Benchmarking against comparable organizations** (i.e. working in the same sphere, of similar size and funding level) to identify adequate systems, processes and policies in the areas of Human Resources (HR), procurement and IT, among others, that will strengthen our operational backbone.

- **Reviewing and strengthening board governance and oversight.** Following the recent restructuring and expansion of our Board of Trustees to 5 members, we plan on developing a board charter and necessary governance by-laws for board performance; defining a board recruitment strategy that ensures the identification of Trustees with relevant skills and competencies to support our strategy; and instituting board committees that will guide and oversee Mzalendo Trust on key areas of operations, such as finance and fundraising. Ultimately, we see the Board as an important "brain and network trust" that will actively and critically interface with staff in the realization of our ambitions.

- **Value-driven, result-based talent recruitment and retention.** Following

the selection of a new Executive Director and targeted recruitment of critical new hires, Mzalendo has developed a steady state organogram with new hires that are necessary to realize its strategy. This said, we recognize the strength of being a small and agile team, and do not intend to grow to more than 10 permanent staff from our current staff base of 5. To strengthen recruitment and retention of talent, we will better define job descriptions, ensure that our staff are adequately on-boarded, and clearly understand the values, culture and ambitions that drive us. We will carry out an HR benchmarking that will inform our approach to compensation and help us put in place human resources policies that support results-based performance appraisal and reward systems. We will finally invest in better defining staff development and promotion opportunities so our staff can thrive and continually learn on the job.

- **Increasing funding and sustainability.** Mzalendo has demonstrated successful delivery and gradually grown its donor base and programmatic focus. Going forward, we plan on developing a funding policy and strategy that defines organizational growth trajectories, the types and mix of donors we intend to prioritize in our fundraising, and the key areas of work for which additional funding is needed. We will pay close attention to identifying workable funding models that increase our sustainability in the long term.

- **Promoting institutional brand and visibility through online and offline communication and media engagement.** Building on our well-established presence on social media, we will double down on offline outreach and marketing to reach new partners and audiences. We will deepen and expand our networks with traditional media to increase our recognition and further our advocacy priorities.

- **Institutionalizing Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Learning (MERL).** Mzalendo's MERL has to date been primarily driven and responsive to donor needs. As a steppingstone to our new strategy, we have carried out a sweeping outcome harvesting exercise with support from NIMD, which has unearthed invaluable lessons and insights from our work to date. Going forward, we plan on defining an organizational approach to MERL, that will see among others: better monitoring of activities and outcomes on a rolling basis; the development of a results framework with Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to measure progress towards our thematic and institutional objectives; opportunities for intentional reflection with staff and partners, including other PMOs, on progress and lessons from our work.

MZALENDO

2021
+
4

STRATEGIC
PLAN