

ACCOUNTABILITY AS A LEVER FOR CHANGE: LAUNCHING A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE FOR DYNAMIC ACCOUNTABILITY

CONCEPT NOTE

Introduction

According to the [CIVICUS State of Civil Society Report 2017](#), only three percent of the world's population lives in countries where civic freedoms can be fully enjoyed. Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) are operating in a very challenging context, where we can see a gradual erosion of civic space: increased repression and attacks to media, scarcer funds for CSOs, threats to CSO legitimacy and lack of D&I practices. Broader trends like economic models that foster inequality, polarizing politics, the emergence of populism and increasingly more divided societies further detriment the contexts where CSOs operate.

In response to these internal and external challenges, several organisations from different parts of the world, working on different agendas and with different approaches have started working in a new way, to achieve long-term sustainable change. This new approach recognizes **accountability as a lever for change** and **puts people at the core of decision-making processes**. These organisations have moved away from more static accountability practices to a more concerted approach that ensures peoples' needs, priorities and contributions are the real drivers of CSO decisions. This approach is what we call **Dynamic Accountability (See Annex 1)**.

Until now, many practitioners have been implementing, advocating and exploring different ways of practicing Dynamic Accountability. However, they have not had the opportunity to share and exchange their practices and knowledge. This includes collectively examining:

- The core elements and characteristics of dynamic accountability
- How the approach and process changes depending on the type of organisation and external context
- What is meaningful stakeholder engagement
- The full potential of dynamic accountability (impact)
- How to fully embed people's needs and priorities in the whole organisation's decision-making processes

A sharing and learning space is therefore needed. This space, which could become a community of practice would allow practitioners (working at the national and international level), academics and donors to gather diverse perspectives and explore different solutions on how CSOs can use dynamic accountability to foster a more participatory and inclusive approach. Through a co-creation process, participants could explore different strategies and solutions, test them in their own field of work and discuss the lessons learned in the community of practice, consolidating the concept even further.

Exploring appetite for...

With the purpose of exploring if there is interest and a need to share experiences on advancing a more dynamic approach to accountability, we are organizing a 3 hour meeting where we will bring together likeminded practitioners and organizations with the purpose of discussing:

- What are the primary elements that we would need to put in place to ensure that people are at the core of decision-making processes at organisations

- If there is appetite to learn and share how organisations are implementing a dynamic approach to accountability
- Is there appetite to develop a platform such as a community of practice, what would be the main goals and how would we operationalize it?
- Who should engage/participate in the community?

This is a great opportunity to join efforts with practitioners from different backgrounds to engage in a dialogue, identify best practices and test tools and strategies to overcome common challenges. The community of practice will not only advance the concept of Dynamic Accountability but also strengthen the work of its members.

When:

7 April, 3:00pm – 6:00pm
 Royal Inn Hotel, Belgrade, Serbia
 Kralja Petra 56, Belgrade 11000, Serbia

After the event, we will have time to network and continue the discussion while we have some drinks and nibbles.

These organisations are already engaged, join them!



AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT



ANNEX 1.

What is Dynamic Accountability

Dynamic Accountability is an approach to CSO accountability where the voices of different stakeholders drive organisational decision-making. To advance this approach, processes grounded in meaningful stakeholder engagement that are inclusive, participatory and continuously practiced are required.

Dynamic Accountability implies the need for a transformational relationship with all stakeholders, making an organisation's way of working adaptive to stakeholders', in particular peoples' needs. This includes redressing unequal power dynamics and building mutual partnerships with stakeholders. CSOs move away from the "up" or "down" positions in the accountability ladder to a more horizontal approach, where partnerships are sought. This approach is based on the experience and expertise developed by organisations like Restless Development, Keystone Accountability and the Global Standard Partners where the aim is to achieve greater and sustainable impact by advancing an inclusive, dynamic and meaningful stakeholder engagement when it comes to CSO accountability.

Dynamic Accountability can be practiced through different actions like providing space and tools for listening and participation and continues dialogue with internal and external stakeholders thus involving them in a co-creation process for programme design or strategic planning processes. Through this approach, organisations become more effective and responsive. They are also able to build stronger trust and legitimacy among their stakeholders. Ultimately, by adopting Dynamic Accountability, CSOs can become more resilient.