

# Accountability as a lever for change

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Outcome document

## *Key takeaways*

- Around 50 practitioners came together to reflect on dynamic accountability and to explore the need for shared learning space.
- The participants shared their understanding of dynamic accountability, which aims: for a power shift, for a cultural change, to be led and adapt to the people and to be a sector-whole approach.
- The need to understand better what adopting a more dynamic approach entails and recollect more examples of its practice was repeatedly highlighted in the sessions.
- Among the participants, there was an agreement that a Community of Practice would be a space worth developing to address this need and continue their learning on the Dynamic Accountability approach.

## **Practicing a more dynamic approach to accountability**

Around 50 people of different CSOs, donors, and academics came together to discuss a more dynamic way to practice accountability and to explore the interest for a space to share and learn on the matter. The meeting was divided into two sessions: a discussion about Dynamic Accountability as a concept in theory and practice, followed by an exploration on the appetite for a Community of Practice for Dynamic Accountability (DA).

There are several efforts done to date to bring people to the centre of our work. CSOs are starting to move away from conceiving accountability and participation as ticking-box exercise towards a more dynamic practice. However, we still have a lot to learn how this is practice more broadly.

## **Dynamic Accountability as an approach**

In breakout groups, the participants exchange their understanding and experiences with dynamic accountability. Each group had the opportunity to listen to an organisation that has experience in dynamic accountability, such as: FemPlatz, Poverty Reduction Forum, Keystone Accountability, Kusi Warma, and Restless Development. Based on the discussions, the participants concluded that:

### Dynamic Accountability...

- Is a practical way of shifting power
- Must include transparency
- Entails a cultural change, which is built in the organization
- Is people- led not donor-led
- Is a sector-whole approach not only within CSOs
- Is being able to communicate with a wide variety of people in different languages
- Includes listening and responsive decision making
- Means constant change
- Uses existing evidence and knowledge from the Busan Partnership and the Sustainable Development Goals

## Exploring the appetite for a Community of Practice

In the second session, we explore the appetite for a space to engage in dialogue and learn from other practitioners.

To adopt a dynamic accountability approach, the participants identified they needed...

- To identify dynamic accountability champions at different levels
- To advocate for it inside and outside CSOs
- To recollect examples of what dynamic accountability means in practice
- To understand how do we change the organization without reinventing the wheel to change things
- To understand better how to shift power
- To create a safe space to talk about challenges and failures
- To learn how to manage expectations
- To change the current narrative
- To create a common approach to dynamic accountability

Based on this, the participants agreed there is a need for a Community of Practice for dynamic accountability, in which practitioners gather to exchange experiences and learn from other in the matter.

Some of goals of Dynamic Accountability Community of Practices should be:

- Learn from the grassroots community
- Exchange ideas with others
- Build a community that looks for real change for a sustainable development
- Keep each other accountable
- Become skilful in shifting the power
- Share responsibility and solidarity
- Find the way together for current and future generation of CSOs
- Share successful mechanism of dynamic accountability
- Share failure and lessons learned.

The members of the Community of Practice are practitioners that are interested in this approach, and are committed to actively participate in the community. However, we should not only engage with each other but have an outward-looking approach, where we can become a lever for change in the sector. We need to further define who is a member and how will they participate in the community.

**To conclude the session, we talked about the next steps.** The Global Standard Partners will support the coordination of the initial efforts to co-create the Community of Practice. They will share the outcome of the event with the participants that are present and those who expressed interest but were not able to attend. From there, we will start shaping the Dynamic Accountability Community of Practice and addressing some of the remaining questions:

- Do we have a common practice when we talk about accountability?
- How do we decide that we are being accountable?
- How do we achieve the shift of power, when practicing dynamic accountability?
- What does dynamic accountability means in practice?
- What can we learn from previous experiences and evidence on inclusive and participatory approaches to accountability?
- How can we adopt and promote dynamic accountability, building upon the current policies and practices within organisations?
- How do we create safe spaces to talk about challenges, failures, and lessons learned?

- How do we create spaces where a wide diversity of organisations can participate and learn from each other?
- How do we create mechanisms of collaboration, mutual accountability, and solidarity within the Community of Practice?
- How do we achieve the balance between being inclusive and having a very active and committed members within the community of practice?