

6 WAYS INTERNATIONAL CSOS ARE ADVOCATING FOR FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) around the world – national and international – advocate to improve people’s lives through a wide range of approaches. In engaging with a wide range of stakeholders, organisations seek to make people’s voices heard, that their rights be respected, with the ultimate goal of fostering more just and equitable societies. Advocating for fundamental change is one of the [Global Standard for CSO Accountability](#)’s 12 commitments, which Accountable Now adopts. Below, we share some examples of how Accountable Now’s members are living this commitment. We hope that you are inspired by their practices!

Ensuring that advocacy is research based

For CSOs, contextual analysis and ongoing research is necessary to identify and stay abreast of advocacy issues. For example, [Amnesty International](#) conducts research for action, systematically monitoring human rights situations in over 140 countries and conducting targeted investigations into alleged human rights violations. Their research spans from civil and political rights issues to economic, social, and cultural rights and covers various contexts – including conflict and crisis situations.

Furthermore, Amnesty International employs a [research methodology](#) (pg.16) that allows them to analyse context, drivers and causes of human rights violations and draws from a wide range of tools, such as system mapping, power mapping, problem tree analysis and political, economic, social, technological, environmental, and legal (PESTEL) analysis. These actions enable evidence to inform advocacy work.

Strengthening coalitions

There is strength in numbers and in combining efforts! Accountable Now member [Accountability Lab](#) has been working to connect their efforts at the ground-level to larger reform processes at the local, national, regional and international levels. [Accountability Lab](#) is collaboratively pushing for reforms based on what they are learning and working to close the “implementation gap” between policy and practice.

The goal of this work is not to become a global-level advocacy organisation, but to complement the work of partners where it makes sense, drive coalitions for change at the local level and connect the dots in ways that can lead to long-term change in communities. For example, Accountability Lab Liberia has formed and joined a series of groups over the years, such as the OGP's network of civil society organisations, a group representing national CSOs and CBOs, and a UN peacebuilding group.

Involving stakeholders throughout the cycle of advocacy

Advocacy is not only about the end result. There is a lot of engagement that goes on before any successful advocacy campaign. It is important that stakeholders are involved in and can take ownership of every step, so that advocacy reflects communities' needs and concerns.

As part of **World YWCA's** programme "Young Women Changing Narratives on Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) and Mental Health", in early 2019, the first cohort of three young women regional coordinators was established, their work spans 25 countries of the YWCA movement from three regions (Asia, Africa, and Eastern Europe).

The goal was to implement new pathways for collective evidence-based advocacy and strategic communication, **co-led by young women**. The YWCAs of Ethiopia, Kenya, Nepal and Ukraine are all focus countries for the project - directly supported to conduct in-country activities. After a broad call for application, three active and engaged young women were selected as regional coordinators to coordinate their respective region's initiative. They played key roles in co-developing and coordinating the project implementation alongside the organisation. Read more about this practice in their [2020 accountability report](#) (pg.17).

Raising the voices of those who are affected

Communities are those most often affected by policy changes, and they should drive the conversation. When relevant, Accountable Now members step back into a supporter role and enable the people and communities they work for and with to be heard directly by decision makers.



ChildFund International's platforms centre children and youth's voice on the selected advocacy issues so they too own them and know what the organisation is working towards. In addition, the organisation has incorporated children's participation and voices in advocacy efforts and events targeting the USA government, speaking directly to decision makers. Youth from Sri Lanka and Honduras participated in the "Lead Like A Girl" event in March 2020, where young women were able to speak directly to policymakers.

Sharing resources to foster learning

Knowledge is power, and that power should be shared! The distribution of information and resources allows organisations to increase their efficiency and avoid duplication of efforts.

For example, **Transparency International** provides its global network of National Chapters and partner agencies with timely resources and evidence to inform their anti-corruption interventions. They publish and disseminate help desk queries that resulted in the production of fully developed answers to the Anti-Corruption Knowledge Hub. Transparency International also collects and uses data as evidence to hold governments and organisations accountable to their anti-corruption pledges.

Advocating transparently

Transparency is the first step towards accountability. People need accessible information to be able to hold organisations accountable – both for their words and their actions. For an interesting example, check out **Plan International's Global Approach to Programme and Influence** document. The document ensures that Plan International is able to deliver their new purpose, and reflects how the organisation thinks change happens and how they can support this. It is publicly available, further enabling the public to hold the organisation accountable.

Interested in learning more? Check out Accountable Now's **Accountability in Focus report - Advocating for Fundamental Change** featuring an overview of member's efforts towards meeting this commitment and more good practices for inspiration!

