Strengthening CSO accountability: Practices and mechanisms

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Purpose
Give a broad view of CSO accountability issues
Share current and evolving practices for strengthening CSO accountability

Outline
Approaches to accountability
Types of accountability
Degree of accountability
Power and accountability
Mechanisms of accountability

Multiple accountabilities
Source: Edwards and Hulme 1996

Upward
Government, donors

Horizontal
Peers

Internal
Organisation, mission, Board, staff, members, supporters

Downward
Beneficiaries, primary stakeholders, those whom the organisation speaks on behalf of

Principal-agent
Source: Lloyd 2005

Traditional approach to accountability

Upward
Government, donors

Horizontal
Peers

Internal
Organisation, mission, Board, staff, members, supporters

Downward
Beneficiaries, primary stakeholders, those whom the organisation speaks on behalf of
Multiple accountabilities

- **Upward**
  - Government, donors

- **Horizontal**
  - Peers

- **Downward**
  - Beneficiaries, primary stakeholders, those whom the organisation speaks on behalf of

Source: Lloyd 2005

Types of accountability

- **Political responsibility**
  - External accountability
  - Moral accountability
  - Procedural accountability

Moral accountability arises from the mission of the organisation

Procedural accountability formal mechanisms adopted for management purposes

Source: Kaldor 2002

Degree of accountability

- **Upward**
  - Government, donors

- **Horizontal**
  - Peers

- **Internal**
  - Organisation, mission, Board, staff, members, supporters

Downward

Beneficiaries, primary stakeholders, those whom the organisation speaks on behalf of

Power

- **Upward**
  - Government, donors

- **Horizontal**
  - Peers

- **Internal**
  - Organisation, mission, Board, staff, members, supporters

Downward

Beneficiaries, primary stakeholders, those whom the organisation speaks on behalf of

Laws, regulations, statutory requirements, funding

Governance rules: Constitution, By-laws, policies

Quality standards, Code of conduct

Moral, ethical

Source: Kaldor 2002
Mechanisms of accountability
Internal / Management

- Constitution and By-Laws
- Governance manual
- Elections of leaders, representatives
- Systems of recall
- Hiring/firing of management and staff
- Policies: HR, administrative, finance
- Performance reviews
- Monitoring and evaluation reports
- Audit: Internal & external
- Assessments and planning: annual, mid-term, strategic

- 360° feedback mechanisms
- Staff climate surveys
- Risk management system
- Open sharing of information
- Learning and reflection processes
- Peer reviews
- External and mixed team reviews
- Organizational values translation, operationalisation in processes and procedures
- ‘Health checks’

Mechanisms of accountability
Horizontal

National initiatives: Voluntary codes of conduct, self-regulation
- Philippines (CODE-NGO, 1991)
- Initiatives in 40 countries - Bangladesh, India, Cambodiac, Pakistan, Indonesia, Taiwan, Sri Lanka, Japan, Singapore, Thailand, South Korea

International initiatives
- Humanitarian: Sphere Project, Humanitarian Accountability Partnership, People in Aid, Red Cross on responding to HIV/AIDS
- WANGO - World Association of NGOs
- Accountability Charter
- Global Accountability Project

Universal / near universal
- Various human rights standards and instruments

Mechanisms of accountability
Downward / Moral

Participatory processes
- Planning
- Implementation
- Review and reflection
- Open sharing of information
- Building primary stakeholders’ capacity to participate
- Timing
- Resources
- Language
- Platforms

Participatory research and appraisals
Participatory reviews and reflection as part of 360° feedback
- Social audits
- Transparency boards
- Democratised governance, primary stakeholder representation or voice in Boards, policy-making
- ‘Health checks’

Mechanisms of accountability
Against the grain: Tales from Hanoi

Governance concerns the rules on how we relate to each other as fellow humans.

Power is a relationship.

And comes and is deployed in many forms.

Desideratum:
Commonly upheld rules on power, which check and balance its flows.