

## Webinar Outcome Summary

**Digital connectivity as a game changer:** How to adapt our accountability practices to the digital age?

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### Topic Experts

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### Digital connectivity as a game changer

- Digital connectivity has fundamentally changed people's expectations on how to engage with institutions. Wikipedia and Facebook show how people today engage in a much more active way to also shape their own outcomes. Strategies of ICSOs started to shift towards so called "people-powered" or "supporter-led" strategies capitalising on external people's skills and knowledge to serve the collective purpose.
- While this may seem as the heyday of civil society accountability – it is not necessarily putting people's interests first at all times. There is still a lot of organisation centric behaviour triggered by concerns about income, brand or board expectations.
- The recent [2016 Health Check](#) by BOND confirms that while civil society organisations (CSOs) are strong on identity and integrity, they are much weaker when it comes to listening and active stakeholder engagement.
- Strong accountability is absolutely key if we want to ensure that people-centric strategies truly succeed to capture optimal value for stakeholders.
- However, an evolved type of accountability is needed. It has to go beyond compliance and reporting to drive a practice and culture that propels interaction, listening, co-creation and sharing of responsibility for actions and results.
- Together with the Digital Accountability [Working Group](#), the Charter developed the [Quick Check Tool](#), which includes succinct questions that measure organisational responsiveness to the digital age. The tool intends to prompt and trigger the right conversations within organisations.
- We also developed a set of key principles for the new accountability paradigm in the digital age including:
  1. *Radical clarity on the value an organisation* is adding in an environment of active people and groups who should be supported first to solve the problem;
  2. *Greater transparency - in-time & on-demand* - way beyond the annual report;
  3. *Clarity on where the CSO is taking a stewardship role* to ensure overall integrity and responsibility of the organisation and where people or partners, who are more actively engaged, also *share accountability for the outcomes*;
  4. *Focus on increasing the quality of empowering relationships* to people and partners as a success indicator in and of itself;
  5. *Collective identification, monitoring and evaluation of impact* and
  6. *A smart risk management* allowing CSOs to let go of control to invite the ownership of others for the common cause while at the same time preserving overall integrity of the organisation.

## Amnesty International: Being an accountable human rights movement in the digital age

- The questions posed by the digital age are similar to all CSOs, but the answers are different, based on the type of each organisation. The question for Amnesty International (AI) is how to make use of the digital age and do what they do, but in a much more effective way. In operating like a platform and democratising e.g. the sourcing of information on human rights violations, AI not only becomes more effective, but also more accountable to communities.
- There are three levels of change to adopt the platform model within AI: (1) top-down strategic level, (2) bottom-up innovation and (3) middle level practices. On the strategic level, AI has partly crowd-sourced their strategy through the contributions of more than 27,000 people whose feedback was essential in prioritising some areas of work such as for example on conflicts and crises.
- In addition, AI included specific goals in their new strategy on working with others. Also, instead of a rigid reporting structure, AI had recently adopted a more flexible impact and learning system that encourages feedback from external stakeholders who agree together on a certain timing to reflect on the progress.
- This shifting mind-set does not only affect online campaigning work but offline work which generates more trust from communities. AI Ireland for example experienced that in their participatory work on abortion. Women were more willing to speak in public about the issue, as trust in AI increased.