# Consultation Report:

Constituent accountability for grassroots organisations, movements, activists and other informal civil society actors

8 July 2022

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- This report was drafted by Alex Martins and Alara Adali on behalf of The Equity Index.
- We would like to thank Jack Cornforth and Yvonne Madondo for their guidance and support in designing and implementing this consultation. We would also like to thank Patricia Deniz for support in translating materials into Spanish and reviewing our work.
- And most importantly, we are grateful to every participant who took the time to engage in this consultation, whether as part of an in-depth interview, a group dialogue session, a survey response or a WhatsApp message. Thank you for sharing your experiences and expertise!

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

Between May and July 2022, a small team of researchers and facilitators from The Equity Index ran an online consultation as part of the Resilient Roots programme run by CIVICUS. The focus of the consultation was **constituent accountability**, that is, the way in which civil organisations or actors seek to put the people they serve at the centre of their work. The target audience of the consultation grassroots organisations, movements, activists, and other informal civil society actors - a priority audience identified in the recently refreshed five-year CIVICUS strategy. The overall focus of the consultation was on constituent accountability, defined in detail below.

**Why this audience specifically?**

"Our analysis of civil society trends clearly points to the emergence of new frontiers. Many of today's movements centre on a new generation of people who are creating their own structures of participation and activism. These mobilisations, often **fluid** and **non-hierarchical in nature**, include young people exercising their civic freedoms for the first time and people from excluded groups reasserting the value of their worldviews. An upsurge in **popular protests and social movements,** coupled with the rise of social enterprises spurred by technological innovations, is transforming the civil society landscape. Traditional notions of formal civil society are having actively having to make way for more dynamic forms of civil society experience. **Across the world, people are forging new platforms and forms of civic engagement that enable greater possibilities for direct action, collaboration and sustained opposition to systemic injustices**." CIVICUS Strategic Plan 2022-2027.

# CONSULTATION OBJECTIVES

| Objective | Our approach |
|---|---|
| 1. Better understand how constituent accountability is understood, practised and leveraged by more informal civil society actors and grassroots groups; | We engaged directly with informal and grassroots groups through various channels (outlined on the next page) to garner their views on constituent accountability. |
| 2. Ensure that participants see value in their participation beyond transactional outcomes and create an experience they view to be meaningful and worthwhile; | Our overarching aim was to ensure that the consultation programme was as minimally extractive as possible by compensating participants for their time and expertise and by using a simple but participatory approach to our interactions. |
| 3. Provide evidence and recommendations to help grassroots and informal actors challenge beliefs (ranging from donors to more hostile adversaries) that they are not accountable and therefore less trustworthy than more established civil society organisations; | We have combined and clustered insights from all four consultation channels to form the basis of our evidence and recommendations. |
| 4. Understand how CIVICUS programming on constituent accountability could become more relevant and responsive to the needs and interests of these specific groups. | We posed this question directly to consultation participants to garner their feedback and views, reported in section 4 of this report. |

# TARGET AUDIENCE

For the purposes of this consultation, we adopted a deliberately broad definition of grassroots or informal civil society actors that does not exclude any organisations based on their specific type/registration status, given that 'grassroots' or 'informal' may look different depending on the context. This can be conceptualised as a spectrum:

Entirely informal          More formal

&lt;────────────────────────────────&gt;

Unregistered        More likely to be registered (but not necessarily)

The types of organisations we are prioritising for inclusion in this consultation had the following traits or characteristics:
- Most likely not registered or 'incorporated' as formal non-governmental organisations - but potentially registered while operating in more informal ways, for instance not having a fixed organisational structure or hierarchy
- Likely to operate based on principles of self-organisation and horizontality (for instance by engaging in different forms of democratic decision-making)
- Likely to emphasise collective voice and demands and rather than set organisational strategies or plans
- Likely to prioritise front-line delivery for or serving the needs of a specific community or group
- If an individual activist, they advocate for a social or political cause that aligns with a grassroots group or organisation's mission or goals, but do not necessarily consider themselves a formal member

**CIVICUS definition of grassroots/informal actors**

Grassroots groups and movements use collective action from the ground up to effect change at the local, regional, national, or international levels. They are therefore associated with bottom-up rather than top-down decision-making, and often considered more spontaneous than established organisations or traditional power structures.

Grassroots groups & movements encourage community members to contribute by taking responsibility and action. Such communities can be place-based, identity-based, issue-based, and self-organise using a variety of strategies and approaches. Their goals vary and change, but are consistent in their working on the frontline to deliver for their communities and/or pursue their causes, bring public attention to specific concerns and for increasing awareness, support and participation on changes needed.

The "informality" has to do with either not being formally registered with authorities, or (when registered) operating in a highly informal way (fluid, non-hierarchical and professionalised).

# CONSULTATION METHODOLOGY

**Key principles:**
- *Participatory:* The consultation was designed to engage target audiences as active participants in the process, and we prioritised smaller, intimate or one-on-one settings to gather information in as participatory a way as possible.
- *Inclusive:* The consultation included different types of organisations from different countries. This allowed for a broader understanding of constituent accountability to be garnered.
- *Bottom-up:* The consultation prioritised understanding how grassroots/informal members practice and understand constituent accountability. This meant creating safe spaces for different actors to answer questions and share experiences of their practice.

**Consultation channels:** The consultation was delivered through four different channels: **(a) individual interviews, (b) group dialogue sessions, (c) survey survey, (d) WhatsApp account.** The variation of the channels will increase the quality of the research by providing the participants multiple platforms to express themselves. Individuals and groups with different needs were able to choose the platform they felt most comfortable in. Participants in the interviews and dialogue sessions were provided with compensation for sharing their expertise.
- 26 participants in one-to-one interviews and group dialogue sessions (with 2 to 6 participants in each group)
- 15 survey responses
- 2 WhatsApp inputs

The following **country contexts and locations** were represented in the consultation (in order of participation): South Sudan, Nigeria, Zambia, Namibia, Peru, South Africa, Hong Kong, Tajikistan, Angola, Nicaragua, Colombia, Kenya, Iran, Indonesia, Uganda, Afghanistan, Chile, Cameroon, Togo, Haiti, Tanzania.

**Limitations:** Time was constrained, and the entire consultation had to be delivered within less than a month. While we captured a wide range of views, this consultation was not large enough to be fully representative of any of the grassroots or informal settings that we included.

# OUR LEARNING QUESTIONS

1. How do grassroots groups and more informal civil society actors **understand** or **define** constituent accountability?
    a. Is this a term that these groups and actors use in their work? If not, what **alternative terms** do they use/prefer?
2. In what ways do these organisations/groups/movements **practise accountability** in relation to the people and communities they serve?
3. How does the **political context** in your country affect practices of constituent accountability?
4. What specific **challenges** or **barriers** do these groups face in relation to the three levels of constituent accountability as defined by CIVICUS:
    a. **Giving** account (how transparent you are in explaining what you do)
    b. **Taking** account (how do you listen to people at the centre of your work)
    c. **Being held** to account (how to get people to take centre stage in your decisions, including setting up formal structures with constituents)
5. Have these organisations/groups/movements faced challenges related to **perceptions** that informal groups are less accountable than more established civil society organisations?
6. Given that these groups are more often associated with **bottom-up** rather than top-down decision-making, how does this influence the ways in which they practice constituent accountability?
7. How could **CIVICUS's programming** in this area become more relevant and responsive to their specific needs?
8. Which of the services/programmes/products/offerings that CIVICUS has provided have been **most helpful**?

# 2. DEFINITIONS OF CONSTITUENT ACCOUNTABILITY

- In the majority of cases, the term 'constituent accountability' is **not used** by grassroots groups even though the concept is practiced and valued highly.
- The term 'constituent' requires **detailed explanation** in order for the groups to understand what is meant by it. 'People' or 'community' resonate more.
- In some cases, 'accountability' is used in a way that encompasses relations with **wider stakeholders** outside of the core community group, for instance donors, policy makers, politicians, and others.
- In the selection of terminology, the priority is the **relationship with community.**
- When communicating with community members about their activities, grassroots groups specifically prefer to use **simple language** which does not include the term constituent accountability or accountability.
- In **official documents** and correspondence with formal organisations, the term accountability is used more often.

# 2. DEFINITIONS OF CONSTITUENT ACCOUNTABILITY: ALTERNATIVE TERMS

**COMMUNITY**

- community-based approaches
- community-centred
- network
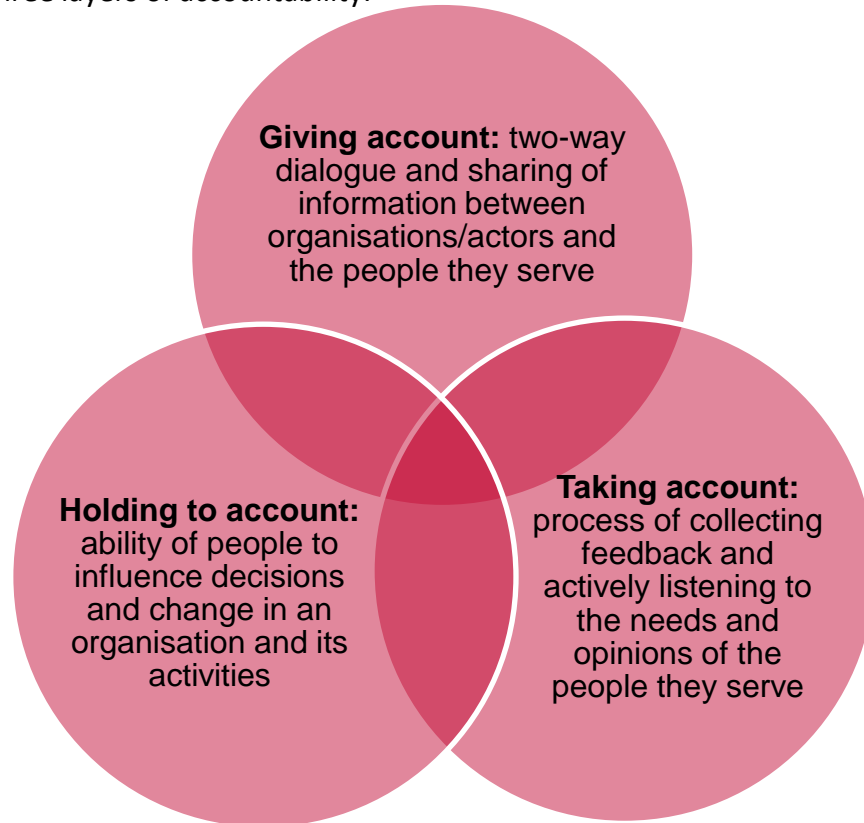- community engagement

**PARTNERS**

- partners
- partner organisations
- comrades
- allies
- participatory
- participation
- stakeholder engagement

**OTHER**

- credibility & trust
- intersectionality
- civic action & mobilisation
- participatory
- participation
- responsible
- membership accountability

# 3. OVERVIEW OF ACCOUNTABILITY MECHANISMS

This consultation focused on three layers of accountability:

**Giving account:** two-way dialogue and sharing of information between organisations/actors and the people they serve

**Holding to account:** ability of people to influence decisions and change in an organisation and its activities

**Taking account:** process of collecting feedback and actively listening to the needs and opinions of the people they serve

*"The thing I know about accountability is that it determines the values, the mission and the goals on what you want to do." Activist from Cameroon working on migrant rights.*

*Source: [The Three Dimensions of Accountability: Resilient Roots](), CIVICUS*

# A. GIVING ACCOUNT (TRANSPARENCY)

The civil society actors we engaged with as part of this consultation highlighted several mechanisms by which they share information with their communities or the people they serve:

- **Direct engagement:** In most cases, consultation participants highlighted the importance of in-person meetings with or visits to communities at times that are most suitable to them. The importance of involving multiple generations in this process was highlighted.
- **Social media:** Most of the organisations and activists we spoke to highlighted the importance of sharing information via several social media channels, including Twitter and Facebook, through messaging apps such as Telegram and WhatsApp, and through mass email send outs.
- **Secure information channels and digital activism:** Participants based in contexts where they face security threats from the government, for example Togo, Hong Kong, Nicaragua and Iran, highlighted the importance of sharing information via secure communication channels and databases. This enables groups and activists to practice digital activism in context where in-person engagement is challenging or impossible.
- **Public reports and budgets:** Some organisations we spoke to produce reports targeted directly at the people they serve or who are meant to benefit from their services (in contrast to reports produced for donors and other stakeholders. We heard of at least one membership-based association in Kenya that advocates for the publication of all project-related budgets in a physical place, enabling communities to review and provide input.

Survey respondents highlighted the following avenues for sharing information with community members:
- Community meetings, dialogues and gatherings
- Setting up of community networks
- Both traditional media and social media

*"My community does not like words - today we have a meeting, they are not interested in that. Interested in actions and things like trees, anything - as long as you are going to do something they will listen to you and they are good to go." Ugandan climate change activist*

# B. TAKING ACCOUNT (LISTENING)

Consultation participants shared multiple mechanisms used to listen to and gather feedback from community members:
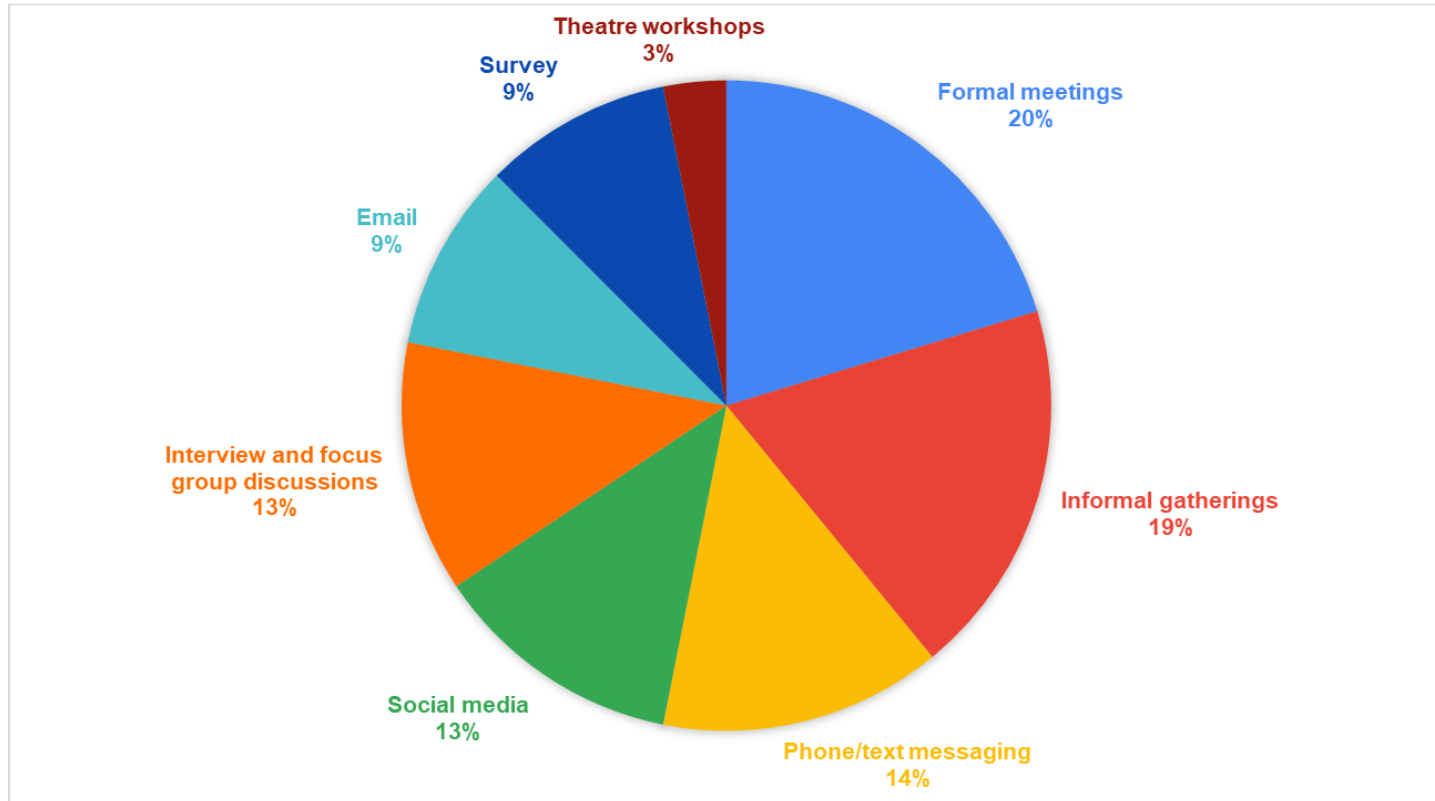
- **Gatherings and workshops:** Several organisations and movements gather feedback through in-person meet ups. For instance, a Pan-African movement conducts annual retreats and forums at which leaders from different regional hubs are represented. Decisions are taken together to inform the annual design for the following year. Another organisation in Chile conducted a series of workshops across different regions of the country to gather input from community members on a project related to digital gender-based violence.
- **Crowdsourcing and community monitoring:** For one organisation Colombia, crowdsourcing exercises are used to gather citizen proposals in order to connect civil society actors and organisations with actors who can put into practice strategic action. In another, the organisation uses community-led monitoring (CLM) processes to improve the services it delivers - data is also collected through interviews to identify service-related needs from affected communities.
- **Feedback sessions using nurturing activities:** One participant from Nicaragua described to us how community members are engaged in all activities in an environment of care and love - catering to their needs is paramount, including through making time and space for self-care (for instance through hiring a masseuse). Final evaluations are held when a project is finished by organising a workshop to meeting to discuss what went well and what could be done differently - the approach, however, is to make the meetings fun by organising different activities or games.
- **Online surveys:** In contexts where civil society repression or marginalisation is high, participants told us they use Google Forms to solicit digital input and feedback from communities.
- **Radio:** Some participants noted they use radio broadcasts to share information and also receive feedback through call-in programmes.

**Cross-cutting theme:** Almost all participants highlighted the importance of gathering feedback directly from community members on intended activities or programmes *before* they are implemented, making sure they are involved in the process from the beginning. This increases the relevance of responses and allows for tailored needs and requests to be identified before delivering specific products or services.

*We would not feel we were doing productive work if we made decisions based on us, leaving out certain people or members of the community." Civil society activist in Central America*

# TAKING ACCOUNT: SURVEY RESPONSES

*Question: In what ways do you gather feedback and input from the people or community members that you serve?*



Theatre workshops 3%
Survey 9%
Formal meetings 20%
Email 9%
Interview and focus group discussions 13%
Informal gatherings 19%
Social media 13%
Phone/text messaging 14%

N = 16

# C. HOLDING TO ACCOUNT (DECISION-MAKING)

- **Collective decision-making:** Participants from Nigeria described that for activism in a student setting, it is important to actively engage with all constituents or comrades affected by poor educational policies, and to take all decisions as a group. For instance, in the case of a particular civil disobedience protest at a Nigerian university, the movement leaders and students came together and decided to not engage in dialogue with the government and to proceed with strike action. We heard from other participants that when activities and actions are planned, as many members from the community as possible are brought together in community convenings to decide what issues affect them the most - this is done by creating safe spaces for at times sensitive conversations, particularly for the most marginalised groups in society. Processes must be horizontal so that everyone's input is captured.
- **Elections, Advisory Councils and other governance mechanisms:** Several participants described putting in place governance mechanisms that allowed community members to participate in decision-making. In the Kenyan context, community-based organisations are oftentimes comprised of community members who then elect representatives and officials, including a Chairperson, Treasurer and Secretary. Before any programme is implemented, this group gathers feedback from the grassroots membership and meets on a monthly basis - they are also required to explain to constituents how finances have been allocated and spent. For membership-based organisations and movements, members will often elect Board representatives from different areas or geographical regions. One organisation in Zambia has assembled a formal Advisory Council with one representative from each geographical region of the country to ensure national coverage.

*"It is about being personally and collectively responsible and therefore we need to recognise our obligation and be accountable to ourselves, to our community, and to the cause that we defend." Civil society activist from Haiti*

# HOLDING TO ACCOUNT: SURVEY RESPONSES

*Question: Do you involve your constituents or community members in the way that you make decisions, for example on what issues you focus on, the approaches you use in your work, how you allocate budget and team member/staff time, etc?* Responses fell into several categories:

- Consultation through group chats
- Communities involved in the actual design, implementation and monitoring of activities
- All activities are undertaken at the direct request of the people the organisation serves - this input is collected through WhatsApp groups and through representatives based in different parts of the geographical region.
- A collective Board to support governance and management
- Through the development of project budgets
- Collaborative scenario planning of 5-year strategies, mid-term reviews and annual 360-degree evaluations

**" We involve our constituents in issues/challenges identification and analyzing their root causes, discussing possible solutions with internal resources and the kind of collaborators they prefer. In most instances, the budgets are usually developed and allocated by staff working in the organisation. Groups usually develop simple budgets and in most cases use the funds within their reach or what they contribute. Very few (advanced) groups are involved in budget utilization."**

# D. GRASSROOTS LEADERSHIP

Informal organisations have leaders who have high levels of responsibility, accountability and care by nature which is directly related to their practice of constituent accountability.

- **Advantage**: This facilitates the practice of constituent accountability because the relationships between leadership and community take central space. The activity areas, actions and projects are built around this relationship. It is a given from the start and not an addition.
- **Challenge**: The accountability process is highly dependent on core leadership. This might leave the leaders burnt out and under-resourced.
- Horizontal relationships take centre stage for informal organisations, however there is still a strong leadership and the responsibility that comes with that. The same **burdens** and needs that arise in more hierarchical settings exist for informal organisations.
- There is a need for **intermediary actors** to connect grassroots leaders with CIVICUS or other support organisations. This would help the leaders to maintain their relationship with their community while receiving the necessary support and knowledge to strengthen their work on constituent accountability. The intermediary actors would act as knowledge brokers between the grassroots groups and formal organisations.
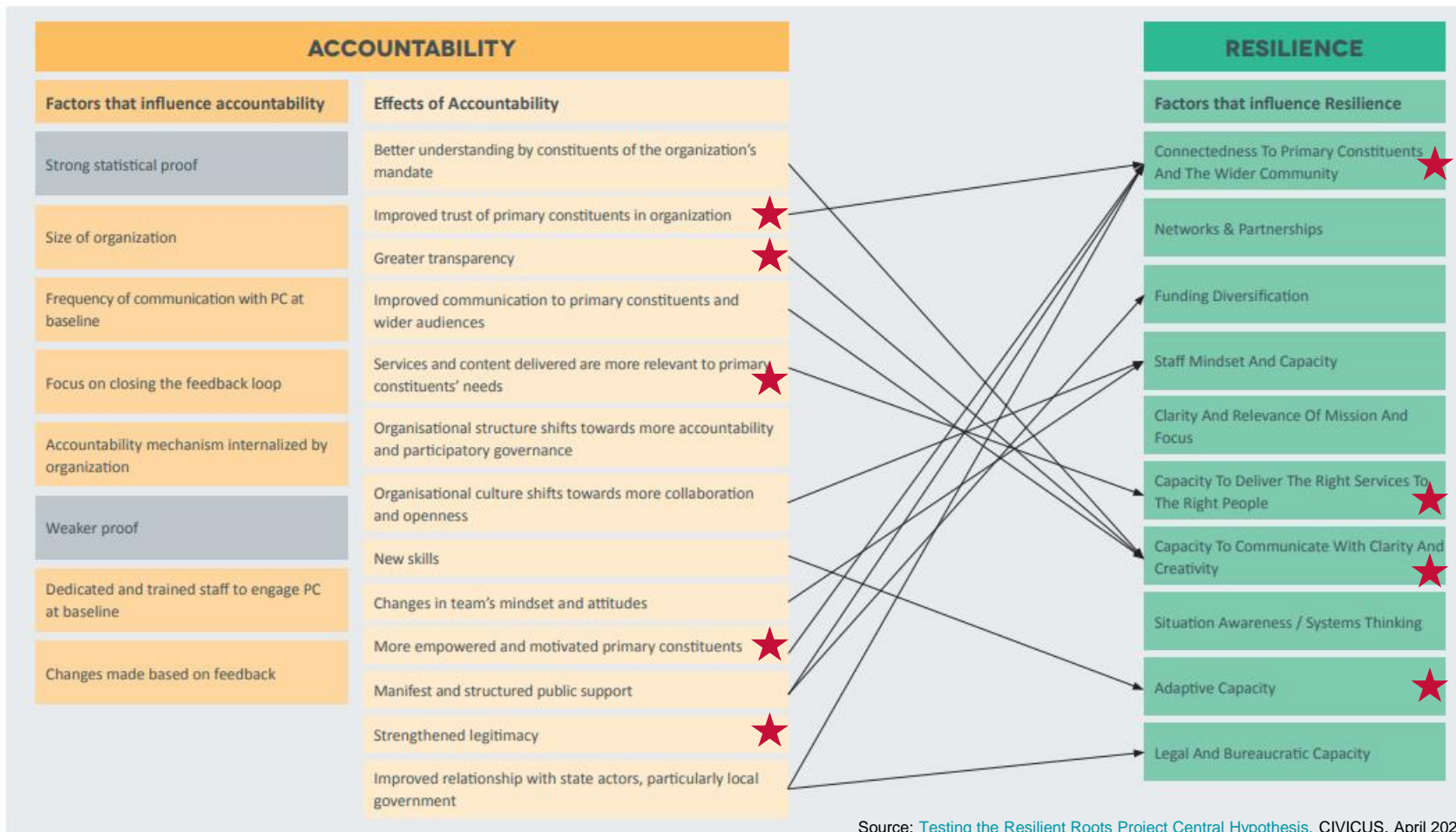
Examples of grassroots leadership:

- In a LGBTQI+ grassroots movement in South Africa, **decolonised leadership** is highly valued. This encompasses relationship with community and power sharing from the beginning. Which also means that in some cases, external organisations are consulted only at a secondary stage.
- In Uganda, a youth activist leader who works on climate change directly receives feedback from their community member via i**n-person meetings or text messages**.
- In Afghanistan, an organisation which is running schools for girls in secret has a leader who is negotiating in person regularly with different actors such as tribal leaders and Taliban leadership. This requires strong bonds of trust, relationship building and resiliency.

# ADVANTAGES OF BEING INFORMAL IN PRACTICING ACCOUNTABILITY

| Typeof advantage | Details |
| --- | --- |
| **Close relationships** | ● Grassroots groups are often able to build a higher degree of trust with communities, which "provides a sense of belonging" and increases the legitimacy of the organisation in the long-term.<br>● Using genuine inclusion, based on relationships to build support from people for their work or cause can be easier for grassroots or informal actors because diversity is best served when there is clear knowledge of individual community members of their needs and preferences. |
| **Honest exchanges** | ● Ability to understand what the community really needs, because of the trust that comes from having direct relationships - this is especially the case in countries with repressive political contexts where communities have high levels of distrust in official or government actors.<br>● Due to the existence of close and more "horizontal" relationships, it is more possible to gain real time feedback from people and communities about their wants and needs. Formal organisation hierarchies can sometimes impede the development of relationships built on trust - organisations driven by the needs of their members or communities can potentially suffer less from this. |
| **Greater responsiveness to needs** | ● Accountability ensures organisations are more responsive and enjoy greater trust from communities, which increases the ability to achieve goals and objectives.<br>● Many grassroots organisations have limited financial resources but very committed human resources, because people are driven by their passion to support a particular cause - accountability can further increase this bond and ensure that grassroots groups have access to the volunteers and others needed to perform their work.<br>● Being more resource-constrained than more formal organisations, which is often the case for grassroots or informal actors, can sometimes have benefits for accountability because of a greater dependence on ensuring that the work is targeted fully at what people really want. |

A CIVICUS study on the link between accountability and resilience uncovered the following 'effects of accountability' - we have indicated with a star which of these relate to the advantages highlighted by consultation participants.
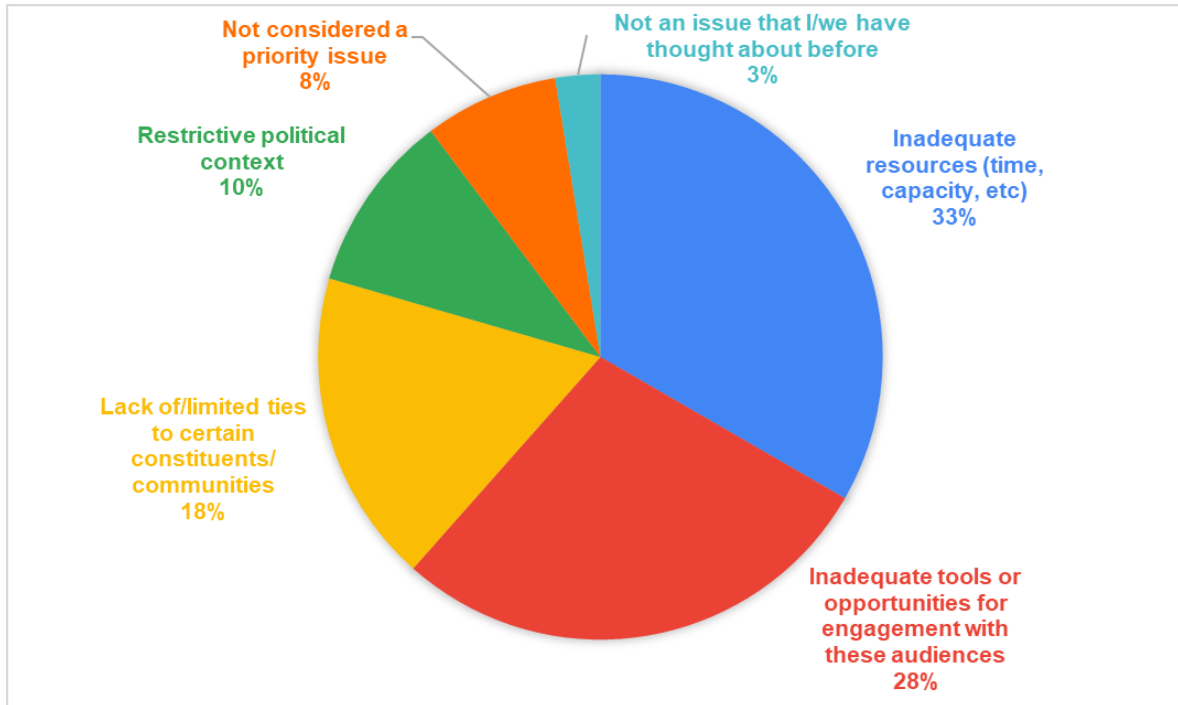
Source: Testing the Resilient Roots Project Central Hypothesis, CIVICUS, April 2020

# CHALLENGES OF BEING INFORMAL IN PRACTICING ACCOUNTABILITY

| Typeof challenge | Details |
|---|---|
| **Security risks & threats** | ● In contexts where civil society actors and activists are actively persecuted, it can be almost impossible to be open and transparent when sharing information or gathering feedback, especially in contexts where anonymity is essential to safety of civil society actors or to protecting constituents themselves.<br>● The need for anonymity can in turn compromise the credibility of informal actors and make it more challenging to prove or demonstrate the impact of their work to constituents. |
| **Limited resources** | ● Most resource is put into directly serving communities, so it can sometimes be challenging to dedicate resources to monitoring and evaluation, feedback or convening stakeholders to participate in decision-making. This is especially challenging when you cannot pay volunteers or staff members.<br>● The lack of resources can contribute to organisational exhaustion, given that few organisations have the resource to task dedicated people with issues related to accountability, including finance and administration. |
| **Mental and physical health** | ● Challenges related to mental health or burnout can easily arise in grassroots or more informal contexts, as the people that work for these organisations often feel immense pressure to deliver results for those they have direct relationships with.<br>● It can be challenging to satisfy the needs of all constituents in very large membership-based organisations - "if you really open up, then people want more - not necessarily a bad thing, but can be challenging to meet." |
| **Generic approaches** | ● Many existing approaches to accountability are based on the needs and resources or more formalised civil society actors - a key challenge, therefore, is the lack of specialised or specific methodologies for practicing accountability in more informal contexts.<br>● At times, tension can arise when funders or partner organisations require more formal types of accountability to be practiced (for instance filling out official or rigid forms) that can at times jeopardise trust and relationships built with communities. |

# CHALLENGES: SURVEY RESPONSES

*Question: What challenges do you face as a grassroots or informal actor (individual or organisation) in practicing accountability with your constituents or community members?*



Pie chart:
- Inadequate resources (time, capacity, etc) 33%
- Inadequate tools or opportunities for engagement with these audiences 28%
- Lack of/limited ties to certain constituents/ communities 18%
- Restrictive political context 10%
- Not considered a priority issue 8%
- Not an issue that I/we have thought about before 3%

N = 16

Other challenges highlighted:
- High cost of Wifi infrastructure and inadequate access to digital ICT tools and platforms that support feedback and information sharing in real time.
- Interpreting some of the information into all local languages
- Mistrust caused by previous experiences of broken promises by previous leaders, governments, past initiatives that have not promoted and practiced accountability
- Lack of time for the targeted groups to get involved in decision making or planning processes,
- Corruption and bad governance in support of the status quo, with no penalties for those not practicing accountability among the public and other sectors and so many people do not care!
- Illiteracy among constituents can make it challenging to gather feedback.

# 4. SUPPORT NEEDED AND FEEDBACK FOR CIVICUS

Participants and survey respondents raised the following needs for support and general feedback:

- **Funding**: Many grassroots groups require more funding support to strengthen their work on constituent accountability. Some groups have received funding from the Solidarity Fund but stated it takes a long time for the full amount to arrive. They would also like for the fund to continue instead of being one-off. There is also a demand to connect with other groups who receive the fund to get inspiration from each other. Targeted funding on accountability would also increase the quality of the work in other areas.
- **Platforms to share experiences** with other organisations and learn from each other. Participants told us that more opportunities to connect are needed, for instance through the types of group dialogue sessions used for this consultation.
- **Mentorship:** Together with discussions and webinars on ensuring accountability.
- **Capacity building or strengthening**: Demand was expressed in different areas such as community engagement, social mobilisation, data analysis.
- **Training programmes** to assist with activity areas.
- **M&E instruments** that can be adapted to small organisations. Due to lack of resources there is not enough capacity to implement M&E projects designed for larger organisations.
- "Constituent accountability needs specific approaches - CIVICUS could create a **handbook** for this. **Tools** to advocate on how to be clear and explore methodology that can be shared to all NGOS/networks."
- Groups would like to see **support from CIVICUS continue for unregistered organisations.**

"CIVICUS is great at **advocacy and publications** - could enlarge their work by calling on their networks and international community to voice and echo our issues that are unlikely to be heard so well."

# 5. CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

➔ Accountability is seen as **fundamental** to the work of grassroots and other informal actors, because people and communities are, as described by a consultation participant from Nigeria, the "life of any movement or organisation - the oxygen needed to breathe." That is, without ways to be held to account by their people and communities, they would be unable to do their work (which very often relies on the momentum, energy and mobilisation of their constituents).

➔ Compared to more formalised organisations, grassroots and informal actors oftentimes pay *more* **attention** to constituent accountability because they cannot afford not to - the people they serve are very often members of their organisations, with an ability to influence decision-making, or indeed are also volunteers that assist the organisation with their work. They must therefore pay close attention to the needs of the people they serve.  The very fact that these groups operate in more bottom-up or indeed horizontal ways is one of the very reasons that they are enabled to practice constituent accountability. Personal connection, relationships and direct interactions matter.

➔ **Leaders** in grassroots organisations or settings have a particular advantage in terms of being able to build strong relationships with constituents. However, it can also make accountability processes dependent on leaders, who often face many demands on their time.

➔ There is a strong demand for ongoing **support** for unregistered organisations, with **funding** for accountability work cited as the most crucial gap. Work on accountability could significantly increase with regular funding opportunities.

➔ Overall, consultation participants that have engaged with CIVICUS were **complimentary** of its role as an advocate for the needs of civil society around the world.

**Key insight:** Whether or not organisations classify themselves as grassroots or informal, what matters most is what they do and how they centre relationships of trust with their communities – for CIVICUS, this is potentially a more important indicator or classification of how to work with different types of members than their official 'organisation-type' designation.

# 5. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CIVICUS

We propose the following recommends for CIVICUS to consider in this area of its work:

1. **Use alternative terms** to describe constituent accountability when engaging with informal groups. e.g. community accountability and/or community engagement.
2. **Be in more regular dialogue** with grassroots and informal actors - in some cases, engagement has been minimal/ no consistent relationship with these groups.
3. **Create platforms or spaces** for grassroots and informal actors to continue to connect on issues related to their aspirations for accountability and the challenges they face in this area, for instance through Zoom group dialogue sessions with up to 6 participants, as used for this consultation.
4. **Consider creating a grassroots-specific toolkit or guidelines** on practicing community-focused accountability, particularly in resource-constrained settings.
5. **Provide catalytic funding** focused on accountability to grassroots or informal groups, which could then increase the likelihood of funding from other organisations.

**Key insight:** With organisations that centre communities in their work, CIVICUS should focus on bridging the gap between the work they do on accountability to the people they serve and potential funders, who do not always understand or appreciate the strength of their community-focused accountability mechanisms.