

2023

ANNUAL REPORT

Accountable Now is a global platform that supports the civil society sector to be **more transparent, responsive, and locally led**. We work to promote a world that is **more just, equitable, and accountable** by helping organizations to **do good better** and by **ensuring that people have the power to hold organizations accountable** for their actions and outcomes.

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A Message From Our Executive Director



Megan Colnar
Executive Director

Dear Friends and Supporters,

In May 2023, I was thrilled to step off the board and into the role of Executive Director at Accountable Now. 2023 was a year of big transitions for our organization, as we sought to double down on some of our sweet spots (like embracing a learning and action focused reporting process) and reconsider our sustainability and opportunities for the future (like entering into a new strategic partnership focused on accountability and cost sharing). With the dedicated support of our members and partners, we continued to advance accountability across the civil society sector in many ways.

In 2023, we moved further into our ‘big tent’ approach for dynamic accountability—moving beyond our focus on member support and accompaniment to identifying opportunities and partnerships to create space, support, and a better enabling environment for civil society around the world. This meant increasing the reach of our activities, learning spaces, and publications beyond AN members in an attempt to reassert our role in thought leadership and create a stronger foundation for civil society practice and accountability globally. We had record numbers of attendance for our 2023 Dynamic Accountability Dialogues, including from activists, funders, Majority World leaders, and our members. And our reach on social media and with our communication resources grew significantly!

2023 was an extraordinarily tough financial year for most civil society organizations, AN was no exception. We experienced a major budget deficit for the first time in our organization’s 15-year history. With good financial discipline in the preceding years, we were able to cover the deficit with our reserves (and still start out this year in a healthy position), but it also indicated a need for AN to continue evolving beyond its sole reliance on membership fees (from CSOs directly) to sustain ourselves in the future. Embracing change can be tough in many contexts, but our members and board rose to the challenge in remarkable ways.



A Message From Our Executive Director (cont.)



Megan Colnar
Executive Director

Importantly, at our AGM members provided a ringing endorsement for AN to formalize our longstanding support and commitment to regional and national CSOs and networks, by opening up our membership platform directly to these organizations. In opening up our membership, we recognized the need to offer CSOs of all sizes and points in their dynamic accountability journeys more ways to participate in our membership platform. We introduced new membership tiers and offers to enable us to meet organizations and networks where they are. Our new approach to reporting, designed by and with our members and Independent Review Panel, also helped our members to reflect on and adapt key accountability areas of their work for better effectiveness and impact.

We also began to work more effectively with external organizations and funders on key projects (like for the Global Democracy Coalition and a new multi-donor philanthropic fund for social movements) to grow additional revenue streams and expand our work to create enabling environments for civil society with a dynamic accountability lens. We also entered into a new strategic partnership with Accountability Lab, joining their Translocal Network and implementing key cost and staff sharing opportunities to cut operational costs into the future. We also worked with our longtime partners and friends of the Global Standard Partnership to shift the role of secretariat from Accountable Now to a distributed model across the partners. And we're looking for ways to expand our reach and support hand in hand with these partners into the future!

Even with the difficulties of the year financially, it was an impressive and exciting year for us. Looking ahead, we see incredible opportunities to ensure our sustainability and work to shore up accountable civil society collaboration and collective action towards a world that is more just, equitable, and accountable. Thank you for being the powerhouse behind our mission. Here's to another year of making a difference, together!

In solidarity and gratitude,
Megan



Announcing a New Strategic Partnership

[READ THE PRESS RELEASE](#)

Accountability Lab and Accountable Now have announced a strategic partnership aimed at enhancing global accountability efforts. This collaboration will enable both organizations to leverage their strengths in promoting transparency, governance, and advocacy around the world.

Accountability Lab is a global translocal network that makes governance work for people by supporting new ideas for accountability, transparency, and open government. It is with great pleasure that Accountable Now joins Accountability Lab's network and we look forward to working in partnership to deepening our advocacy, research, and stakeholder engagement - and contributing more sustainably to the global accountability ecosystem.



MEMBERSHIP

The real drivers of Accountable Now's strategy are our members. Together we strive to be transparent, responsive to stakeholders and focused on delivering impact.

Our members have adopted the 12 Accountability Commitments of the Global Standard and have committed to pro-active stakeholder engagement to drive better strategic decisions and collectively owned impact.

Growing our membership community:

In 2023, we launched our more inclusive, tiered membership model to provide right-sized support to a wider group of organisations, expanding our membership to grassroots and national organisations, networks and funders.

[Read more about our membership tiers and benefits](#)



Our Members in 2023

Accountability Lab
 ActionAid
 Amnesty International
 Article 19
 ChildFund Alliance Secretariat
 ChildFund Australia
 ChildFund International
 ChildFund Korea
 ChildFund New Zealand
 CIVICUS
 Educo
 MIO-ECSDE
 Plan International
 Restless Development
 SOS Children's Villages International Secretariat
 Taiwan Fund for Children and Families
 Terre des Hommes International Federation
 Transparency International
 TECHO
 World Organisation of the Scout Movement
 World YWCA

[View our members' accountability reports](#)

Support to Members

We are here to make accountability easier. In 2023, 76% of our members have received Help Desk support. Requests range from reviewing internal policies, to proving safeguarding resources, to serving as a one-off external complaints focal point.



REPORTING AND ACTION PLANNING

We believe that accountability reporting is about more than due-diligence and compliance aimed at donors and governments, but rather a continuous process that involves reflection, learning, and course correction to ensure that organization's work is efficient and effective. Our Reporting and Action Planning Framework guides organizations through an internal reflection and reporting process to assess how well they are advancing their mission and living out their values. Reports are then assessed by an Independent Review Panel to maintain credibility and integrity and published online.

A New Reporting Framework

2023 marked the launch of our new, more agile reporting process that is designed to limit the reporting burden and to define and address key accountability areas within organizations. The new framework, co-created together with a committed group of member representatives plus members of our Independent Review Panel and external experts, was endorsed by our members at the 2023 AGM.

In 2023, four of our members reported using the new framework.

Independent Review Panel

[Learn more about the IRP and read the panel members bios](#)

Our expert Independent Review Panel (IRP) plays an integral role in Accountable Now in maintaining the credibility of our work by independently and critically assessing our members' compliance with our 12 Accountability Commitments through our reporting and action planning review process.

Accountable Now would like to express our deepest gratitude to all of our IRP members for their continued service. The 2023 members were:

Elodie Le Grand [Co-Chair] (Founder, Consentia)

Marlen Mondaca [Co-Chair] (Vice President of Programs and Partnerships, Canadian Feed the Children)

Angela Crack (Associate Professor, University of Portsmouth UK)

Afërdita Pustina (Country Director, TACSO)

Brendan Halloran (International Budget Partnership)

Charlie Martial Ngounou (Public Finance Expert, AIMF)

Jeremy Sandbrook (CEO, Integritas360)

Marina Kobzeva (Independent Practitioner)

Muhammad Taher (Chair of the Steering Committee, SADN)

Simon Lawry White (Founder & Director, Vine Management Consulting)



GOOD PRACTICES

When reviewing Accountable Now Members' reports, the Independent Review Panel identifies good practices which could potentially serve as inspiration and provide valuable information for other members and the wider sector.

The basis upon which our Independent Review Panel assesses our members accountability to identify good practices is the 12 Accountability Commitments of the Global Standard Partnership for CSO Accountability. They form a comprehensive set of standards that support our members to live our their values and deliver on their missions to protect people and the planet.



[Read more about the 12 Accountability Commitments](#)

In 2023, the IRP recognised 4 practices from our members' accountability reports submitted in 2022.

Responsible Stewardship for the Environment

Taiwan Fund for Children and Families' new buildings, including their new headquarters, were built with environmentally conscious design in mind, highlighting environmental awareness at the organization. TFCF also made a conscious effort to use energy-efficient equipment and have taken measures to reduce water consumption and their waste.

Enhanced Accessibility and Transparency

CIVICUS has made a copy of their strategic plan publicly available (in 6 languages) on their website, showing their commitment to being inclusive. The plan shares their vision and mission along the four strategic goals which reflect their belief that people-powered and collective action should be at the center of transformative change.

Strong Feedback & Complaints Mechanisms

ChildFund Australia offers confidentiality alongside the protection of a complainant and/or survivors through their complaint handling mechanisms. This is an example of good practice through the organization's attention to the potential consequences on an individual when reporting and making sure the support and necessary protocols are in place to protect the whistleblower.

Participatory Impact Measurement

Transparency International's approach to monitoring impact is collaborative, participatory, and designed to help the organization gain a better understanding of what works in the fight against corruption.



FOSTERING COLLABORATION + KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

Accountable Now connects, grows and develops accountability practices across the sector. Recognizing the shared challenges and opportunities experienced by individuals in pivotal positions, Accountable Now's Peer Advice Groups (PAGs) are spaces where professionals can connect, exchange valuable insights and resources, and develop practical solutions and strategies to overcome challenges relating to accountability together.



2023 Peer Advice Groups



Participation & Accountability Working Group (P&A WG):

co-hosted by Accountable Now and MERL Tech

The Participation & Accountability Working Group (P&A WG), co-hosted by Accountable Now, was part of MERL Tech's active Natural Language Processing Community of Practice (NLP-CoP). The working group provided a space to discuss critical topics related to the use of AI, NLP, and accountability. Through a series of events and an active community forum, participants explored practical steps for collective action - driving progress in responsible AI and NLP usage while finding solutions to the ethical and practical challenges they present in the MERL field and beyond.

Check out **this article** sharing insights from Accountability Lab's #HackCorruption program – presented by Cheri-Leigh Erasmus, Co-CEO and Chief Learning and Agility Officer at Accountability Lab and David Sada, Operations Manager at Accountability Lab Mexico shared during the P&A WG speaker series.



Finance & Operations Peer Advice Group:

co-hosted by Accountable Now and Accountability Lab

The Finance & Operations Peer Advice Group (FinOps PAG), launched in August 2023, connects heads of finance, governance, and operations from Accountable Now's membership and beyond to discuss and share practical solutions on all accountability issues incurred in budgets, risk management, building internal capacity, quality assurance, and beyond.



PROJECTS + PARTNERSHIPS

Global Standard Partnership for CSO Accountability

With: Australian Council for International Development, PIANGO, InterAction, DENIVA, PHE Ethiopia consortium, VANI, VIWANGO, WACSI, RENDIR CUENTAS, Balkan Civil Society Development Network, Cooperation Committee for Cambodia

The Global Standard for CSO Partnership was created in 2017 by Accountable Now alongside eight other international, regional and national accountability networks around the world. Through their collective hosting of the 12 Accountability Commitments (Global Standard Partnership for CSO Accountability), advocacy, and various projects, the partners champion a vision of accountability that is dynamic and responsive to those who are most affected by civil society's work.

[Learn More](#)

Recognition for the Global Standard for CSO Accountability:

OECD DAC: Recommendations on 'Enabling Civil Society in Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Assistance'

DG NEAR: Guidelines for EU Support to Civil Society in the Enlargement Region

BOND: Becoming Locally Led as an Anti-Racist Practice

Open Government Partnership: Actions to Protect and Enhance Civic Space

Dynamic Accountability Community of Practice (DACoP)

With: CIVICUS, Restless Development, Accountability Lab, and Keystone Accountability

The Dynamic Accountability Community of Practice (DACoP) was founded in 2020 as a space to share insights and experiences in practising dynamic accountability. In 2023, the community continued to support CSOs and practitioners to advance dynamic accountability through convening spaces for knowledge exchange and working collectively to address shared challenges. A 2023 highlight of DACoP was the learning session 'Co-Design and Collaboration' which brought together practitioners to exchange challenges and exchange potential solutions for developing a meaningful co-design process.

[Learn More](#)

Accountability Spotlight *(from the DACoP newsletter)*

Balkan Civil Society Development Network (BCSDN) is comprised of fourteen CSOs from ten countries in South-Eastern Europe with the mission to promote functioning and sustainable democracies in the Balkans by strengthening CSOs and advocating for enabling civic environments at national and regional levels. In this article, learn about the steps BCSDN is taking to enhance accountability-based D&I.

[READ THE ARTICLE](#)

PROJECTS + PARTNERSHIPS

Coalition governance, strategy, and renewal for the Global Democracy Coalition (hosted by International IDEA)

The Opportunity

The Global Democracy Coalition is a multi-stakeholder network of over 180 democracy focused organisations from around the world, including some of our long-time partners like Accountability Lab, InterAction, Transparency International and West Africa Civil Society Institute. The coalition formed several years ago around the launch of the Summit for Democracy, which brought together progressive world leaders, policymakers, and civil society organizations to ignite democratic renewal. Several years after formation, the GDC Steering Group recognized that as the coalition formalized and began to introduce more complex programming and convening the rules, governance, and strategic framing around their work needed to be updated and formalized to better serve the coalition into the future.

Our Role

For this project, Accountable Now used its expertise in adaptive and responsive governance, decision-making, and stakeholder engagement to consult, review and update the Coalition's governance, strategic framework, and decision-making structure. Importantly, we identified ways to bring more democratic processes and consent-focused agreements into the GDC's ways of working. We engaged the Coalition's Steering Group, partners, and current host institution to revise their roles, responsibilities and relationships to one another, and co-designed a new strategic framework to better articulate the aims and offers of the coalition looking ahead.

Designing and launching the Collective Action Assistance Fund for Humanity United

The Opportunity

Alongside a major investment by the US Government in people-powered movements, Humanity United is launching a multi-donor pooled fund that aims to deliver flexible and responsive funding and support to enable movements and their essential ecosystems and infrastructure. Employing a participatory grantmaking approach, the Fund will actively involve affected stakeholders with lived experience whose insights will inform decisions and provide guidance on the strategic framework, design, and execution of the Fund.

Our Role

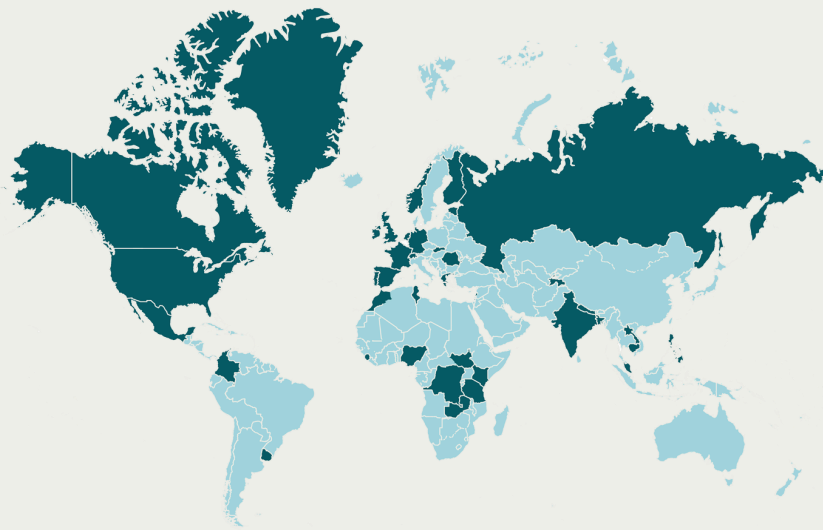
The ongoing support from Accountable Now to Humanity United and other philanthropic partners is aimed at strengthening the initial design and launch of the Fund. Leveraging Accountable Now's long-term expertise in philanthropy, innovation, field development, participation, knowledge acquisition, and stakeholder-driven accountability, we are putting together the architecture necessary to ensure that this groundbreaking Fund lives out its value and goals, and positions social movements for sweeping people-powered change.



CONVENING CSO ACCOUNTABILITY PRACTITIONERS AND OTHER CHAMPIONS OF ACCOUNTABILITY: Dynamic Accountability Dialogues

The Dynamic Accountability Dialogues series brings together national and international CSOs, funders, practitioners and other champions of accountability to discuss accountability challenges and solutions.

For our 2023 **Dynamic Accountability Dialogues: for Locally Led Development**, Accountable Now brought together organisations, funders, foundations, and practitioners interested in advancing locally-led actions to discuss the importance of strengthening our accountability efforts to advance a kind of development that is collaborative, community-led, and equitable using dynamic accountability as the lever.



Over three days, we brought together a diverse group of participants from 74 organisations and 39 countries for a series of discussions on people-powered accountability

Accountability and People Power in Climate Finance

This discussion took a closer look at how climate finance can be more participatory and inclusive, and how our approach to dynamic accountability can be used as a lever for better climate finance and actions.



[WATCH THE RECORDING](#)

[READ THE ARTICLE](#)

Dynamic Accountability in Practice

Practitioners from a diverse group of organizations shared their insights and experiences in embedding dynamic accountability principles and practices.



[WATCH THE RECORDING](#)

[READ THE ARTICLE](#)

What is My Role in Locally Led Development?

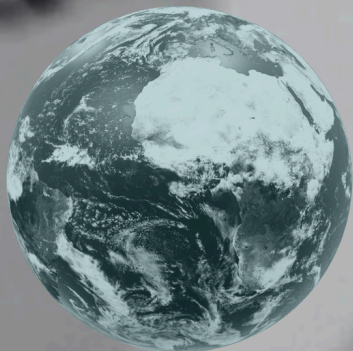
During this open dialogue, we mapped what different civil society actors can do from their position of influence to change the sector - and what is needed from others so we can join the dots for wider long lasting change built on equitable relationships and trust.



Research + Publications

Featuring the latest trends, good practices, and thought-provoking insights shaping accountability and transparency in nonprofits, our Insights blog aims to spark meaningful conversations, share valuable resources, and support leaders and practitioners dedicated to driving lasting positive change.

[VIEW ALL INSIGHTS](#)



NLP for Good: Key Insights from the #HackCorruption Program

#HackCorruption, developed by Accountability Lab in collaboration with Development Gateway and the Centre for International Private Enterprise (CIPE), unites professionals from the fields of technology, data science, civil society and policy-making to develop solutions to combat systemic challenges of corruption.

[READ NOW](#)

This article shares insights presented during the Participation & Accountability Working Group's speaker series. [Learn more about the group.](#)

Reflections on Fostering Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

While we all recognise that diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) values drive the way we work positively, recognition must be accompanied by implementation – and implementation is the hardest part. This blog post looks at how organisations can enhance their accountability through fostering diversity and inclusion in their work, from policy to practice.

[READ NOW](#)

Embracing Change as a Matter of Accountability

Change is the one certainty these days. In order to reach a more just and equitable future, the civil society's organising principles and activating muscles must continue to evolve and adapt. Hear from Rachel Smith (AN Board Chair) about the ways we are embracing change.

[READ NOW](#)

Building Back Greener: Environmental Accountability in the Post-Pandemic Context (Issue 205 of the southasiadisaster.net journal)

Accountable Now continued to work with All India Disaster Mitigation Institute to create a special issue of their journal. This issue brings together a wide range of articles from practitioners, researchers and community leaders, with contributions from around 20 individuals working in local CSOs, INGOs and donor organisations from around the world, and explores how they have re-negotiated environmental accountability following the Covid-19 pandemic.

[READ NOW](#)



Dynamic Accountability

Dynamic Accountability Guidebook

The Dynamic Accountability Guidebook provides a simple, clear overview of the dynamic accountability approach - and how and why (!) it should be practised, plus case studies that demonstrate how dynamic accountability works in practice.

[READ NOW](#)

In 2023, we launched the guidebook with the publication of our first case study on World YWCA's Feminist Consultation Methodology.



World YWCA

Feminist Consultation Methodology



We look forward to releasing more case studies in 2024 and beyond!

Want to see more of our research and publications?

[VISIT OUR KNOWLEDGE HUB](#)

Accountability Pill Podcast *Your mini-dose of CSO Accountability*

Our Accountability Pill podcasts brings together different practitioners from around the civil society sector to explore issues and to share and exchange their approaches, as well as lessons learned.



Listen to all episodes:

www.soundcloud.com/accountablenow

Youth Engagement Miniseries

We asked - youth answered. In 2023, we launched a new podcast series on meaningful youth engagement, created by and for young people with conversations on the issues that matter to them. Hear young people discussing the challenges and barriers they face, their ideas on how to build a more just & inclusive future, and the ways that CSOs can support young people to thrive.



Meaningful Youth Engagement Cheatsheet

We provide organisations with the information and resources they need to meaningfully engage youth and support youth-led organisations to grow and thrive. Our Meaningful Youth Engagement Cheatsheet shares tips to ensure that young people have the access and get the power and recognition they deserve.

[CHECK IT OUT](#)

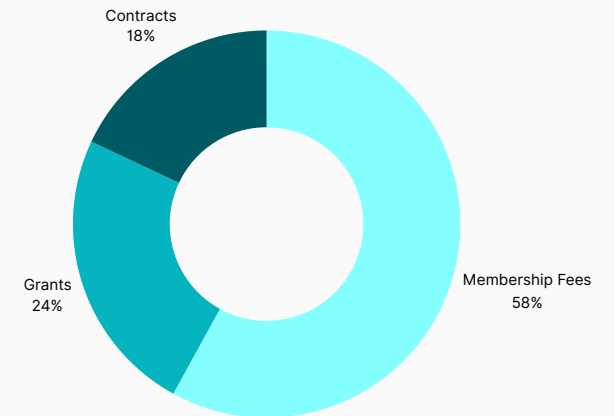


2023 FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

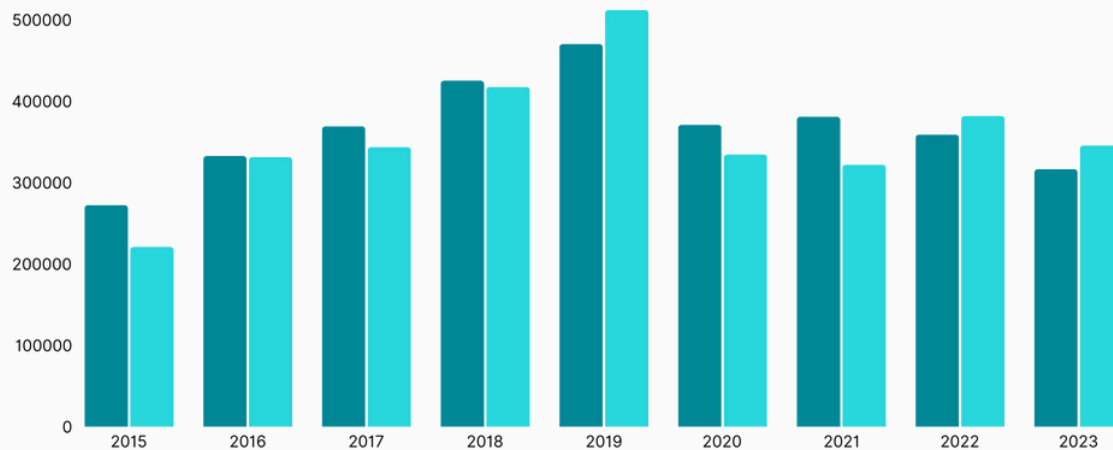
From January to December 2023, Accountable Now’s total income was **EUR €316,312** (an 11.87% decrease from EUR €358,916 in 2022). This income was predominantly derived from membership fees (58%), with grants and contracts making up the remaining income. In 2023, Accountable Now spent a total of **EUR €345,504** (a decrease of 9.5% compared to EUR €381,766 in 2022), with the majority of resources (51.86%) used to pay salary costs.

Accountable Now closed 2023 with a **deficit of EUR €77,594**. This deficit was attributed to the ending of our Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) funding for the Global Standard, a major increase in operational costs (including inflation and increased regulatory burdens in Germany), and the loss of a couple of members in the previous year. The deficit was covered by AN’s healthy level of reserves, built through sound financial management in previous years. In 2024, Accountable Now has implemented measures to avoid a significant future deficit - from expanding our membership base to diversifying our revenue stream for a healthier income mix.

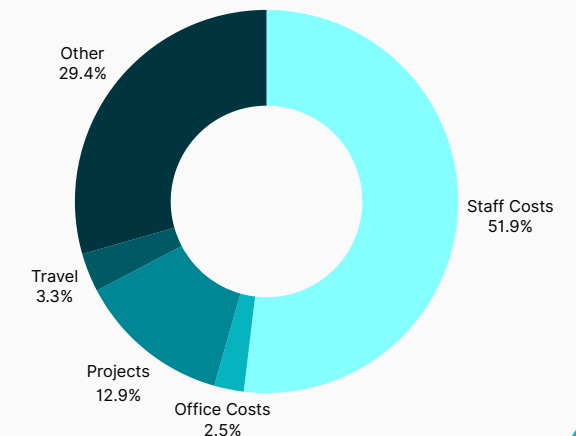
2023 Income Distribution:



Comparative Year-to-Year Income and Expenditure History (2015-2023)



2023 Expense Distribution:



Please note: 2023's financial statements were prepared by independent bookkeepers in accordance with German regulations, however these figures are unaudited (with approval from our Board of Trustees).



Accountable Now

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