Dynamic Accountability Checklist

Dynamic Accountability is a systemic approach to CSO accountability that is grounded in processes of meaningful engagement with all stakeholders that are inclusive, participatory and continuously practised. It implies the need to make a whole organisation's way of working adaptive to these stakeholders' needs. This includes redressing unequal power dynamics and building mutual partnerships with all its stakeholders. CSOs move beyond stakeholders being "up" or "down" the accountability ladder to a more horizontal and mutual approach. Dynamic Accountability recognizes that relationship-building with all stakeholders is necessary to truly achieve systemic change in the form of a power shift within and outside the organisation towards the people a CSO works for and with. Relationship-building enables different stakeholders to be part of this power-shift agenda. In this way, the people we work for and with become the recognized drivers of the CSO work that affects their own lives.

We want to make sure engaging stakeholders does not become an afterthought in an organisation. We need to recognize that we are interacting with a range of stakeholders that we need to build mutual and meaningful relationships with to achieve our aim to truly do development differently. These include amongst others our volunteers, staff, local partners, our donors, development actors etc. The checklist below summarises the most important aspects we need to keep in mind and are tailored towards the structure and aims of an organisation.

Y = Yes, I = Insufficient, N=No

Y	I	N	
TRANSPARENCY & OPENNESS			
			Are we open and transparent in all levels of the programme (implementing partners, workstreams, working group, steering committee) - including about our failures?
			Are we publishing information in a way that is accessible to a wide range of stakeholders?
DIVERSITY & INCLUSION			
			Are we paying special attention to being inclusive of all genders, social classes, cultures, age classes etc. in everything we do?
			Are we speaking the language of our stakeholders and use non-technical words?
ENGAGEMENT & DIALOGUE			
			Are we actively encouraging and seeking what our stakeholders have to say (open to constructive criticism) and making people feel comfortable raising their voices?
			Are we asking our stakeholders how they can and want to be engaged and what we can do to support this engagement (considering that they might not know what is possible yet)?
RESPONSIVE DECISION - MAKING			

			Are we ensuring that decision-making processes at all levels are informed by and responsive to stakeholders?
			Are we openly discussing with our stakeholders whether their needs, concerns or ideas have been addressed and discuss our way forward together with them?

REFLECTIVE LEARNING

			Are we continuously monitoring, evaluating, learning, adapting and innovating together with our stakeholders and with a focus on lasting results?
			Are we continuously reflecting on the appropriateness and usefulness of the mechanism used to engage with stakeholders through listening, inclusion, participation etc. (including continuous testing and evaluation of the mechanism used)?

ADAPTIVE PROGRAMMING

			Are we planning in enough flexibility to be able to change things based on what we are learning from our stakeholders?
			Are we allocating enough funds and staff time to enable a more flexible approach to deliverables and timelines, and to push for Dynamic Accountability?

MUTUAL PARTNERSHIPS

			Are all our collaborations with stakeholders happening at eye level in a mutual partnership?
			Are we effectively holding each other to account?

EMPOWERED STAFF & VOLUNTEERS

			Are we ensuring that staff and volunteers are motivated, trained and empowered to know how they can meaningfully engage their stakeholders on all levels?
			Are we involving staff and volunteers at all levels including decision-making and providing them with tools to hold leadership to account?

PRINCIPAL DRIVEN RESOURCE - MANAGEMENT

			Are we balancing value for money approaches with our responsibility to limit our harm to the environment?
			Are we being radically transparent on how we spend our resources allowing the people affected by our work to hold us to account?

SYSTEMIC CHANGE & POWER - SHIFT

			Are we putting mechanisms in place that go beyond a programme's life cycle and start transforming organisational culture and practices (including within our own organisations)?
			Are we restructuring power-imbalances at all levels: strategic (e.g. strategy development), operational (e.g. engagement in Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning), and internal (e.g. staff empowerment)?