

## Accountable Now Board Meeting

### 16 September 2025 Minutes

**Present:**

Rachel Smith (Chair of the Board, Independent)  
Babacar Ndong (Educo)  
Caleb Jamal Masusu (Restless Development)  
Patricia J. Lerner (Independent)  
Javier Gonzalez Gomez (Independent)  
Sarah Ritta Kattan (World Scouting)  
Jesselina Rana (CIVICUS)  
Violet Tsagka (Independent)  
Vanessa Goas (Independent)

**With apologies:**

Mary Brezovich (SOS Children's Villages International)  
Jean Scrimgeour (Accountability Lab)

**In attendance from the Secretariat:**

Megan Colnar, Executive Director  
Onesimus John Waino, Associate Chief of Staff and Administration

### Welcome and Board Matters (ACC 25/11)

- The Chair welcomed all and confirmed that quorum was met and formally opened the meeting.
- The Chair provided an overview of the meeting agenda, noting that the discussion would focus primarily on the organisation's revenue and funding strategies, including updates from the Finance and Risk Committee and opportunities to refine approaches for securing future funding. The Chair also noted that while some governance items—specifically directors' indemnity insurance and the review of bylaws—had been raised in previous meetings, no formal decisions would be made at this session. These matters would be progressed through the forthcoming Governance Committee, with updates expected at the next board meeting. The agenda was reviewed and approved without amendments.
- The minutes from the June 2025 meeting were approved via chat vote.

### Executive Director Updates (ACC 25/12)

The Executive Director provided an update on recent activities and organisational developments, including facilitation with member organizations and partners in Geneva, noting both as valuable opportunities for engagement and partnership. She shared that organisational partners and members continue to express positive

feedback, citing recent meetings. While two old members are leaving the network; The Executive Director observed that recent member departures were partly due to internal transitions and financial considerations, but also reflected the maturity of certain long-term members. Having engaged with Accountable Now for many years, some organisations have integrated accountability principles deeply into their internal systems and may now view continued membership as less essential, marking a natural point of transition in their organisational journey. Overall feedback from members and partners remains very positive, with several praising Accountable Now's responsiveness and adaptive approaches.

The ED acknowledged the team's high workload during a busy season and confirmed that steps are being taken to manage wellbeing and ensure staff take adequate leave, while ensuring sustainability during a demanding travel and event season. She commended the team's growing leadership and internal coordination, noting marked improvement in the quality and efficiency of board materials

### Finance Overview

The Treasurer and Executive Director presented the 2024 financial close-out and an update on 2025 performance. Accountable Now remains on target with spending and revenue, performing slightly above budget expectations despite a deficit budget approved as part of the transition plan. Financial oversight is stable under the Finance and Risk Committee, which meets quarterly and reviews all key variances. The transition of bookkeeping systems to QuickBooks is nearly complete and will simplify reporting. The Committee does not foresee major risks at this stage and is preparing for a procedural budget realignment to match the new chart of accounts. The 2024 unaudited figures were endorsed for inclusion in the annual report.

AN has recently secured a USD 20,000 unrestricted grant from Humanity United and is projecting an additional USD 40,000 from the Packard Foundation, positioning the organisation to close the year in a strong financial position. Early discussions with Vitol Foundation and the Ford Foundation offer further funding prospects for the coming year.

### Budget Planning and Forecasting

Megan shared that the Secretariat is preparing a 2026 draft budget based on three funding scenarios—conservative, expected, and growth. The FRC will review this ahead of the December planning meeting. The Board discussed the importance of aligning budget priorities with core strategic objectives, emphasizing sustainable staffing and membership engagement investments.

### Organizational Development

The Executive Director highlighted ongoing improvements in team leadership, cross-functional collaboration, and operational systems. Staff have taken on increased ownership of key projects, and several initiatives are now led by emerging team leaders. The organization continues to emphasize staff well-being, encouraging full

use of leave and flexible arrangements to manage high workloads. These efforts aim to strengthen organizational resilience and maintain a high standard of delivery across projects and partnerships. The ED highlighted the successful completion of the internal communications and branding refresh, including redesigned member materials and website updates. The Secretariat continues to operate under the fiscal sponsorship arrangement with Accountability Lab, with strong operational collaboration and administrative alignment. The team anticipates convening an in-person staff retreat in early 2026, contingent on closing current grant applications.

### **Governance and U.S. Registration**

The Board discussed the next phase of governance development following Accountable Now's transition from its former German registration to the current fiscal hosting arrangement with Accountability Lab. Plans are underway to establish a Governance Committee to guide work on future structure, bylaws, and director indemnity matters. The Committee will also support ongoing reflection on board composition, governance best practice, and compliance needs under the new hosting framework. Updates and recommendations are expected for the next board meeting.

### **Revenue Strategy and Membership (ACC/13)**

#### **Membership Update**

The Executive Director reported continued positive engagement across most members, though two long-standing organizations have formally ended their membership. The departures were attributed to a mix of internal transitions, funding pressures, and a natural point of maturity after many years of engagement. The Executive Director noted that such changes reflect both budget realities and the achievement of key internal accountability milestones by some members. Discussion emphasized the need to introduce clearer membership "journeys" or milestones and to distinguish between the community-building aspects of membership and Accountable Now's service offerings. The Board agreed to explore a deeper review of the membership model at the December meeting.

#### **Funding Partnerships and Grants**

Several new and renewed funding partnerships were confirmed, including a flexible grant from Humanity United and additional funding from the Packard Foundation. Further prospects with other foundations are advancing. Collectively, these opportunities close the remaining 2025 revenue gap and position the organization well for 2026. The Board discussed the evolving mix of income sources contracts, grants, and membership fees and noted the significant progress in diversifying beyond membership funding. The Executive Director and team will continue cultivating multi-year relationships to strengthen financial stability.

#### **Strategic Engagement**

The Board reviewed Accountable Now's evolving revenue strategy and the application of its "3E" framework (Equip, Examine, Enable) to guide programming and funding alignment. Members reflected on balancing grants, contracts, and membership income to ensure both sustainability and mission focus. Discussion emphasized the importance of aligning project work with member needs, exploring appropriate engagement with corporate partners, and maintaining clear value propositions relative to peer accountability networks. The Executive Director invited continued input on the optimal revenue mix and confirmed that a more detailed discussion on membership structure and growth will follow in the December meeting.

### **Governance: Proposed Committees and Roles (ACC/14)**

The board Chair introduced the discussion on formalizing Board committees and clarifying roles to strengthen governance and Board engagement. She outlined three proposed standing committees: the Finance and Risk Committee, the Governance Committee, and the Membership Committee.

The Finance and Risk Committee (FRC), already active and will continue to oversee financial management, audits, budgeting, and organizational risk.

A Governance Committee was proposed to guide the organization through its ongoing transition from being an independent entity in Germany to its current fiscal hosting under Accountability Lab. This committee will help clarify long-term governance arrangements and accountability structures appropriate to Accountable Now's evolving role and growth.

The Membership Committee will focus on developing and supporting the member offer, linking directly to the evolving revenue and engagement strategy. The proposed group will primarily include the member-representative Board members.

The chair emphasized that these committees should both add value to the Secretariat's work and help the Board exercise its oversight and strategic roles effectively. Final appointments and confirmations will follow further discussions with interested members, with formal updates to be shared at the next Board meeting.

### **Executive Session (ACC 25/15)**

An executive session was held to discuss board succession planning and long-term resource stability. The Board reaffirmed its commitment to maintaining continuity through 2026 while supporting the Executive Director's strategic priorities.

The next meeting will be held virtually on the 4th of December 2025.

**Megan Colnar**

Executive Director

**Rachel Smith**

Chair of the Board

**END**